



SPORT

Favourites fall in the Cup



COMMENT

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NETWORK

adonna



Wrongly hanged: Hanratty is found innocent

EXCLUSIVE by Jason Bennetto, Crime Correspondent

James Hanratty, hanged for one of the most notorious crimes this century, is set to be cleared 35 years after his execution for the A6 murder.

Hanratty, 25, was convicted of brutally killing a married man before he raped the victim's lover and repeatedly shot her leaving her paralysed for life.

Home Office officials are understood to have concluded that Hanratty was innocent. This follows an unpublished police inquiry which concluded last year that he was a victim of a miscarriage of justice and that the murder was probably part of a wider conspiracy.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is expected to announce within the next few weeks that he is to refer the case to the Court of Appeal, where the conviction is expected to be quashed.

The reappraisal of the case follows more than three decades of campaigning by members of Hanratty's family and his supporters. Many of the campaigners believe the real killer was Peter Alphon, who is alleged to have admitted to the crime on numerous occasions. There are also a string of evidence that links Mr Alphon to the murder.

However, Mr Alphon, 66, speaking from his home in London, told the Independent that he was innocent.

Hanratty, a petty burglar, was convicted of abducting Michael Gregson, 36, and his mistress Valerie Storie, 22, at gunpoint from a carpark at Taplow, near Maidenhead, in Berkshire, in August 1961. The lovers were forced to drive about 60 miles to a lay-by on the A6 near Bedford, known as Deadman's Hill.

At the end of the two-hour trip Mr Gregson, a research scientist was shot dead. Miss Storie was then sexually assaulted and before being shot repeatedly at close range.

Hanratty was arrested in Blackpool two months later, on 9 October. Reports at the time said this followed the "amazing" identification of Hanratty by Janet Gregson, the wife of the dead man, who saw him on a London street and her "intuition" told her he was the killer even though at that stage he was not a suspect.

He was convicted largely on the identification evidence of Miss Storie, despite her only seeing her assailant for a few seconds and only identifying Hanratty in a second line up. She later admitted that

her memory of the attacker was fading.

On the morning of his execution at Bedford jail Hanratty wrote to his family, insisting he was innocent and asking them to clear his name. His brother, Michael Hanratty, 58, who has fought for the past three decades for the case to be taken to the Court of Appeal, said: "The day before Jimmy was hanged he said: 'I'm dying tomorrow but I'm innocent. Clear my name.' This is what we need to be able to do."

At first the campaign was headed by Hanratty's father, also named James, who toured Britain showing a film in an effort to clear his son's name. He handed out leaflets to the public outside the House of Commons proclaiming his son's innocence.

But any pardon will come too late for Mr Hanratty's father, who died 20 years ago. The campaign was taken up by Hanratty's mother Mary, who is now suffering from Alzheimer's disease, along with Michael, and his other brothers, Peter and Richard.

Other campaigners included two lawyers, John Justice and Jeremy Fox, who became convinced of Hanratty's innocence. Four books and a number of television programmes, including two by Yorkshire TV, have also been instrumental in having the case reopened.

In the 1992 programme, "Hanratty: Mystery of Dead Man's Hill", a documentary for Yorkshire TV, the film-maker Bob Woffinden called for DNA tests to be carried out to establish the true identity of the murderer.

These were eventually carried out at the beginning of 1995, by comparing semen found at the scene of the crime with DNA from Hanratty's exhumed body. But unfortunately the DNA retrieved was not of good enough quality to obtain a result. The campaign has gone on ever since.

One of the most implausible aspects of the case was the acceptance that Hanratty, a city dweller, should by chance come across the couple in a carfield and carry out a random killing.

It emerged after his execution that Hanratty also had a good alibi. Fourteen witnesses came forward to back up his claim that he was in Ryth, North Wales - 250 miles from the scene of the crime.

In his interview with the Independent,



The 35-year fight for justice

22 August 1961: Michael Gregson murdered and Valerie Storie assaulted and shot

17 February 1962: James Hanratty tried at Bedford Crown Court and convicted of murder

4 April 1962: Hanratty hanged

1967: Peter Alphon "confesses" to killing in Paris, but later denies it

1971: Paul Foot's book *Who Killed Hanratty?* published

1992: Television programme *Hanratty: Mystery of Dead Man's Hill* broadcast

1995: Inconclusive DNA tests of Hanratty carried out

1996: Police inquiry concludes Hanratty was innocent

SUNDAY PICTORIAL

HANRATTY JURY TAKE 9½ HOURS

By Gill Hamilton and Bill Duncan
THE murder trial of the century ended dramatically at 9.15 last night when James Hanratty was found guilty of the murder of Michael Gregson. He was sentenced to death.

Women at the back of the court at Bedford Assizes sat in a hush when the eleven-man jury returned their verdict in the case of the A6 killing.

Hanratty, wearing a grey suit and white shirt, sat in the dock looking down at the floor. He had a pale face and his hands were clasped in his lap.

He had been in the dock since the trial began on 17 February. He had been accused of murdering Michael Gregson and his mistress Valerie Storie on August 9, 1961.

He had been accused of abducting them from a carpark at Taplow, near Maidenhead, in Berkshire, and forcing them to drive to a lay-by on the A6 near Bedford, known as Deadman's Hill.

At the end of the two-hour trip Mr Gregson, a research scientist was shot dead. Miss Storie was then sexually assaulted and before being shot repeatedly at close range.

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In his interview with the Independent,



JAMES HANRATTY - the A6 killer. First picture

Before his execution, Hanratty wrote to his family insisting he was innocent: 'I'm dying tomorrow. Clear my name'

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QUICKLY

Newcastle out of Cup
Newcastle United went out of the FA Cup yesterday after losing 2-1 at home to Nottingham Forest. In the other big cup match of the day, Chelsea went through to the fifth round after coming back from 0-2 down to defeat Liverpool 4-2. Sport tabloid

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Reading standards at new low

Anthony Bevins and Lucy Ward

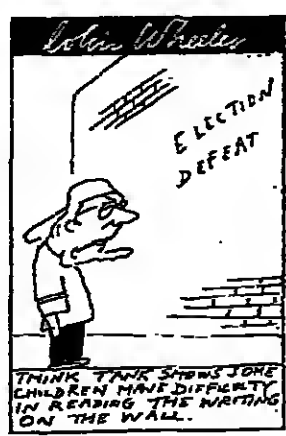
Appallingly low standards of reading in primary schools across Britain are identified in a new report, published as the Cabinet meets today to consider its election manifesto - with education reportedly at the top of the agenda.

The independent survey of National Curriculum test results for 600,000 7-year-olds suggests there is a "major crisis" in the teaching of English and mathematics. The survey, carried out for the right-wing Social Market Foundation, examined unpublished Government data on test results for reading, spelling and mathematics. It concluded that the findings of failure, between and within local education authorities, amounted to "a major indictment of what has passed for 'good primary practice' over the last two decades."

And while the Conservatives habitually blame Labour-controlled local education authorities for the education crisis, the survey shows that Conservative-controlled Westminster fell below the national average grade for 7-year-old reading and spelling results.

One proposal up for discussion at Chequers today is the creation of "super-schools", allowing good schools to expand to meet the demand of parents wanting the best for their children. Margaret Thatcher's 1987 election manifesto said schools should be allowed to expand to their "agreed physical capacity". Popular schools, which have earned parent support by offering good education, will then be able to expand beyond present pupil numbers.

Under the heading "Opportunity for All" - the present campaign theme - John Major promised in his 1992 manifesto: "Popular schools which



are oversubscribed will be given the resources to expand." However, five years later, a decade on from Baroness Thatcher's pledge and after 18 years of Conservative Government, a recent Audit Commission report found that popular schools were still unable to grow to match demand, and

parental appeals had risen by 44 per cent over three years.

Today's Social Market Foundation report said that while Ofsted had recently found 79 per cent of pupils in three London local education authorities were below average in reading, that was by no means unusual.

"The results for reading given in this paper for these three LEAs are very low," it said. "But they are very similar to those for about another 20 LEAs... together with the primary schools in other great conurbations such as Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester and Sheffield. Even within the best authority, Richmond-upon-Thames, there is a reading age gap of almost two years between the best and worst schools in the borough. A similar 'crisis' is identified for mathematics."

Today's Chequers meeting will also be faced with policy proposals on law and order, employment, and health, but there

represents the Hanratty family, said: "We have been asking for a referral to the Court of Appeal with the new evidence for more than a year. The police officer appointed to look into the case came up with a view that he was innocent. Clearly, his conviction should be quashed by the Court of Appeal."

"There are a lot of people who say bring back hanging. The fact that such a well-known banged person turns out to be innocent will act as a powerful example against capital punishment."

The Home Secretary will have to announce his decision on the Hanratty case by the end of March when the new Independent Criminal Case Review Commission takes over the role of resolving claims of miscarriage of justice from the Home Office's C3 department.

It would be unusual for a Home Secretary to go against the advice of his officials in such cases.

Miscarriage of justice? page 8

news

Royal yacht taxes Labour minds

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

After twelve hours of complete confusion, Labour yesterday reaffirmed that it would not be spending any taxpayers' money on the replacement for the Royal Yacht, *Britannia*.

But last night a spokesman for Tony Blair's office said: "We are not ruling out for ever spending a penny on the royal yacht. We are not saying never ever a penny."

Nothing could have been clearer than the guidance offered on Saturday, that Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown

had sent a message to the Queen, letting it be known that Labour would not honour last week's Tory pledge to pay for a new £60m yacht.

For good measure, and to firm up the non-attributable briefing given by Mr Brown's office, defence spokesman John Reid went on BBC television on Saturday night to add: "We are saying that we will not fund, out of public expenditure, £60m on a royal yacht when there are demands like health and education."

But there was a more equivocal line from Tony Blair's office, with one source suggesting

that no one had said there would be no government money at all for the royal yacht.

Yesterday morning, Alistair Darling, shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Labour's spending axeman, went on BBC television's *Breakfast with Frost* to give the definitive Labour view - a reflection of the leader's line.

Frost's question was clear enough: "You have in this case, according to the stories, specifically decided that the royal yacht should not be part of your spending?" Mr Darling replied: "No, what... what we have said

Frost interrupted: "You haven't. Oh, it's not..." Mr Darling continued, saying that the yacht had to be considered alongside other projects in education and the health service, but he did not rule out government spending.

That prompted Frost to ask: "So contrary though, Alistair, to the leaks yesterday to the papers, this decision has not been made and there may be taxpayers' money under Labour spent on *Britannia*?"

In spite of his frontbench colleague's appearance on BBC television news the night before, Mr Darling said: "Well, I do

wish these people who write these stories would actually come and ask, rather than rely on leaks and so on."

Mr Darling later apologised for any confusion, indicating that there would indeed be no taxpayers' money for a royal yacht under Labour.

He said there was no money set aside for a royal yacht in Labour's spending plans for its first two years in office and, after that, it would have to take its chances against other competing claims in health and education.

However, Labour would also be looking at other means of financing the replacement; a clear hint that private finance would be sought.

"I'm normally as clear as day," Mr Darling told *The Independent*. "I'm sorry if there was any confusion."

Last night, the line was that there was no budget for a royal yacht in Labour's first two-year spending plans. After that, the project would have to compete with education and health and, therefore, private finance would be sought.

But that did not mean that no taxpayers' money would be spent by a Labour Government on a royal yacht.

significant shorts

Car bomb injures soldier in Northern Ireland

A soldier was recovering yesterday after being slightly injured when a car bomb exploded in Northern Ireland. The injured man was one of three off-duty soldiers in checking their vehicle in the Lisburn Street car park, in Ballynahinch, Co Down, when the device went off. A Royal Ulster Constabulary spokesman said the victim was treated at hospital for minor injuries and was later released.

No organisation has claimed responsibility for the bomb, which exploded at 1.30am.

Superintendent Ronnie Hawthorn, an RUC sub-divisional commander, said: "As a response of the increased terrorist threat and increased terrorist activity, as was witnessed at Ballydugan last weekend, there is a heightened degree of security and vigilance." He added that it was a miracle no one had been killed in the blast.

Five men were arrested in the early hours yesterday after security forces spotted suspicious activity in Main Street, Dungiven, Co Londonderry. A police spokesman said an improvised grenade and a rifle were recovered as part of the operation.

Baby-milk officials under fire

The Department of Health is to review its handling of health scares after criticism from health visitors over delays in dealing with the salmonella outbreak linked to baby-milk powder, a spokeswoman said yesterday.

The Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association is to write to the Government to voice concerns over what it believes was a two-day delay in consulting health professionals. More than 10,000 worried mothers have called telephone hotlines for advice after a possible link between an outbreak of salmonella affecting 12 children and the product Milumil was announced. All packs of Milumil were withdrawn from sale while further tests were carried out.

A Department of Health spokeswoman said: "We made every effort to get information to the public as quickly and efficiently as possible, but we can always learn from experience."

Meningitis kills US student

An American has died of meningitis just 10 days after he began a three-year degree course at a Scottish university. Brian Bainbridge, 27, a physiotherapy student at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, died of meningococcal septicaemia on Saturday, two hours after being taken to hospital from halls of residence at Woolmanhill.

Mr Bainbridge, from Maryland, arrived in Scotland 10 days ago with a group of 21 American students - all of whom have been given antibiotics. Other students at Woolmanhill have been advised that only people in close contact with Mr Bainbridge needed medication. A spokesman at the university described his death as "a tragedy".

Activists burn poultry lorries

Animal rights activists yesterday claimed responsibility for a fire which left seven lorries loaded with frozen poultry badly damaged. A spokesman for the Animal Liberation Front said incendiary devices had been placed beneath lorries at Buxted Fresh Quality Poultry at Brackley, Northamptonshire, on Saturday night. No one was hurt in the fires which caused thousands of pounds worth of damage.

Coach driver black-out

A driver who blacked out at the wheel of a National Express coach yesterday while travelling at 60 mph on the M42 is to be questioned about the incident, police said.

The hostess on the coach, Tina McCall, had to steer the vehicle to safety after the driver Mark Davies, 30, lost consciousness near Solihull, West Midlands.

The coach was badly damaged - but Ms McCall, 40, and the 30 passengers were unhurt. Mr Davies was treated in hospital for a minor head injury. Police said there is no suggestion that drink or drugs were involved.

All winners together at Camelot

Big winners on the National Lottery may be given their own club so they can get together to discuss the impact of their new-found fortunes on their lives. Camelot confirmed yesterday. The club would be open to around 300 millionaires and 2,000 players who have won more than about £150,000, but details of the membership list would of course remain a closely guarded secret.

Striking a note for the birds

The desperate plight of Britain's disappearing songbirds is to be raised in Parliament today by Mr Tam Dalyell, Labour MP for Linlithgow.

Some of the best-loved species, he warned yesterday, which were common a few years ago, are facing decimation unless urgent action is taken to protect them.

18 feet below, the word from Big Momma is: No surrender

Jojo Moyes

Five "human mole" protesters barricaded in a tunnel deep below a road camp in Devon were threatening to remain underground for a month after their surrender terms were rejected yesterday.

The protesters, who are in a maze of tunnels 18 feet underground, said they wanted construction to stop until an "unhindered and open" public inquiry was held into the new A30 project including its design, building, and financial and operating systems. They also called for relevant documents to be open to public scrutiny, with financial details of the road to be revealed to the inquiry.

But the under-sheriff of Devon, Trevor Coleman, leading the eviction of the Fairmile camp on the route of the A30 near Exeter, said their proposals were "totally unacceptable". "They are unrealistic and I could not deliver on them anyway because I do not have the power to do so. I cannot negotiate," he said.

Speaking from below ground by citizens' band radio link, protester John Woodhams said that if their demands were not met "we will just hang in here as long as we possibly can in the hope [Mr Coleman] will change his mind and save a lot of time and money".

The only female underground protester, known as Animal, warned that they would ultimately lock themselves on to secure underground points and added: "We have got food and

water to last almost indefinitely."

The Fairmile eviction is the third and last involving camps built over the last two and a half years in the path of the £65m, 13-mile road scheme between Exeter and Honiton.

Stephen Langley, a surgeon at Southampton Hospital who yesterday descended the length of the protest tunnel so far cleared, said the protesters "appear to be very well with plenty of food and water. They could be down there for about a month, they have got enough supplies for that long". He added: "I would not like to be down there. It is cold and confined and the soil is very wet."

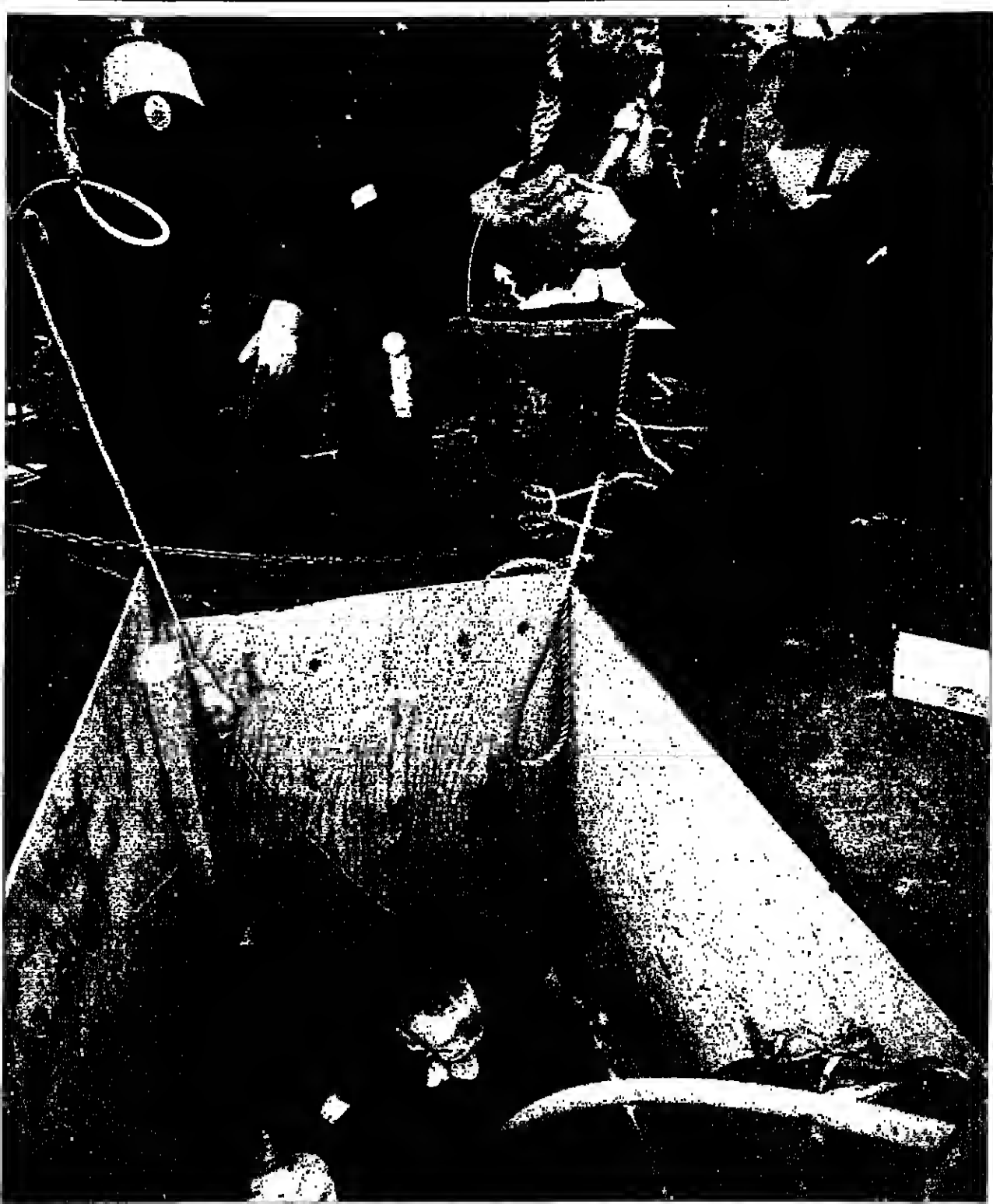
Early yesterday, tunnelling specialists cut their way through a six-inch-thick steel-plated door leading into the protesters' tunnel, which is called Big Momma.

Mr Coleman said the tunnelers faced arrest when they finally came out. "They are obstructing me, I have been down the shaft and read them a specific warning relating to tunnelling obstruction and the cost."

But he added that it was "anyone's guess" how long it would take to get them out. "We still do not know the extent of the tunnel," he said.

Earlier the protesters' communications van, which had a direct link to the tunnelers, was moved off site by police order. The protesters set up another link, but that closed down shortly after their news conference.

Mr Coleman said alternative communications had been set up by the police and the underground specialists, but they



Dug in: The eviction team trying to get access to the protesters' tunnel at Fairmile, Devon. Photograph: Richard Lappas

had been rejected by the protesters. Talks with the under-sheriff, Mark Clark, said it was believed behind that there was an 18ft vertical shaft

and a "maze of offshoots". Meanwhile, work was continuing to remove three remaining protesters from trees on the site. A police cordon around the

camp had been extended because other protesters were said to be coming to the area from Newbury and elsewhere, Mr Coleman said.

Clergy forget Commandments

Ian Burrell

Almost two-thirds of Church of England vicars cannot remember all Ten Commandments according to the results of a random poll.

Some of the 200 clergy questioned could name only two - "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife".

The results of the poll provoked anger among traditionalists, including Conservative MP John Redwood, who has called for stronger moral leadership from the church. He said: "It's their job to remind us of the laws of Christianity. The commandments are central to the faith and I am amazed that so few could recall them."

One vicar, the Rev Geoffrey

Shilcock, of Wolverley, Worcestershire, who could not remember all the commandments, said: "The trouble is that they are very negative. Most people prefer a more positive approach."

Lord Coggan, 87, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, defended the clergy. "They were just caught on the hop that's all."

A Church of England spokesman said: "When people are put

of course they know they are very important indeed. [The commandments] provide a framework for life. Within the perimeters of these commandments you have a healthy society. Step outside them and you have a recipe for disaster."

Asked which politician offered the best Christian leadership, 49 per cent said Tony Blair, 9 per cent Paddy Ashdown and 7 per cent John Major.

on the spot like this, of course they can't remember. Given time they would recall them."

However, Canon Peter Goodridge, from Truro, Cornwall, said it was right they were forgotten. "They were right for a community from a different time living a nomadic life."

The poll, conducted for *The Sunday Times*, also found that many vicars do not believe in fundamental aspects of traditional Christian faith. Thirty one per cent of those questioned did not believe in the Virgin Birth; 12 per cent did not expect a Second Coming; and 5 per cent did not believe Jesus performed miracles.

Asked which politician offered the best Christian leadership, 49 per cent said Tony Blair, 9 per cent Paddy Ashdown and 7 per cent John Major.

Former ministers share £500,000 'goodbye' cash

More than 70 Tory former ministers who have resigned or been sacked since the 1992 general election have shared £467,000 in tax-free "golden goodbyes".

Labour claimed yesterday. John Redwood, who resigned as Secretary of State for Wales to fight John Major for the Tory party leadership on a platform of backing spending cuts, collected £8,658 as his severance payment.

Former Chancellor Norman Lamont, another supporter of public-spending cuts, also received more than £8,000, according to Labour's dossier.

Ian McCartney, Labour's employment spokesman, said he obtained the severance payment figures after research by the House of Commons Library. He contrasted these pay-

ments with the Government's opposition to Labour's plans for a national minimum wage. "Former ministers who attack protection for the low paid have been happy to walk off with tax-free cheques for up to £8,000 - more than the 2 million people earning less than £3 an hour get in a year," Mr McCartney said.

Under the current rules, ministers receive one-quarter of their ministerial salary when they leave office, regardless of whether they resign or were sacked. Mr McCartney said: "It seems that whatever the reason for their exit from office, former Tory ministers have had no scruples about accepting a 'golden goodbye' at the taxpayer's expense."

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صوتك من الامم

Ban urged on holiday drug after girl dies

Glenda Cooper

A six-year-old girl has died after using a controversial anti-malarial drug used by thousands of British people every year who travel to areas where the disease is rife. It is the first documented death linked to melloquine, which is known to cause serious side effects in some people.

The drug, also known as Larium, is popular because it only has to be taken once a week. But hundreds of travellers have reported psychological disturbances such as panic attacks, depression and hallucinations. Suicide attempts have also been blamed on the use of Larium.

Last year a Bristol-based law firm announced that it was to seek compensation for people who suffered serious side effects after taking Larium. To date, Lawrence Tuckett has been contacted by around 500 prospective litigants.

In August, the *British Medical Journal* reported that the incidents of side effects was as high as one in 140 travellers who were taking melloquine, and unpleasant enough to temporarily stop their day-to-day activities. This compares with a figure of one in 1100 of those taking other anti-malarials chloroquine and proguanil. Because of increasing resistance, these drugs are less effective than before.

Lance Cole, of the pressure group Larium Action, which has 300 members, called for immediate suspension of the drug saying: "This is the first attributable death we know about. It is further proof there is a problem with the drug."

In the case reported in the *Lancet* by doctors at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle, a six-year-old healthy girl was given Larium for going to Nigeria on a four-week holiday. She had not taken the drug before and was not on any other medication.

Five weeks after starting the course, she developed blisters on her lips and a swollen face. Her skin erupted, parts of her body became ulcerated and she shed both hair and nails. She developed fever, anaemia and septicemia (blood poisoning). After being admitted to a paediatric intensive care unit she suffered heart problems and died after 19 days.

Writing in the *Lancet*, Professor Clifford Lawrence of the Department of Dermatology and Plastic Surgery said: "We believe that this case of fatal toxic epidermal necrolysis in a previously fit and healthy six-year-old was due to melloquine. Extensive investigations revealed no evidence of an alternative drug or other causes."

Hail to thee blithe spirit (But not if you live in Middle England)



Poetic licence: Percy Bysshe Shelley by Amelia Curran (1819) in the National Portrait Gallery, and the poet's memorial in Horsham which has caused local uproar

Photograph: Andrew Haddon

Jojo Moyes

Nearly 200 years after his death, the controversial poet Percy Bysshe Shelley has again managed to divide his home town of Horsham in Sussex. He has done this not as a result of his revolutionary, anti-monarchist, vegetarian views – but through the sculpture installed to commemorate him.

Unveiled in a blaze of glory last November, *Universe Rising* is a huge, mechanised globe designed by the award-winning sculptor Angela Conner and paid for by Sainsbury's, the supermarket chain.

The moving sculpture stretches across 45 feet and stands 28 feet high. Six and a half tons of water run down it, while smaller "satellite globes" float in pools of water. At the opening ceremony, the mayor of Horsham, in Italy, where Shelley died, described the memorial, after some thought, as "very brave".

The sculpture's aim, according to Horsham District Council, was to provide a focus for the town centre that was challenging and controversial "like the poet himself". In this, it has exceeded their hopes. While a piece of radical sculpture might not be expected to please everyone in a conservative home-counties town, the design has elicited criticism bordering on the hysterical.

Inhabitants have bombarded the local *West Sussex County Times* with letters calling for the sculpture's removal, describing it as "an abomination", an "eyesore", "irrelevant, incongruous, incoherent and indulgent", and, less flamboyantly, "an oversized pastie".

The newspaper itself commented: "His appearance and quality as a public work of art has attracted widespread derision and distress. Just how long it will survive is the burning question of the moment."

The detractors are not just complaining about the design. The £140,000 sculpture has not worked properly since it was unveiled and parts of it are to be removed this week so that alterations can take place. Horsham District Council has commissioned an independent report on the sculpture's mechanical engineering before assuming responsibility for it.

The fountain has splashed so much water over the square that one councillor suggested the area be turned into a skating rink. One local man is taking legal advice after he fractured his skull and dislocated his shoulder after coming off his bike on ice nearby.

Revolutionary lines from Shelley England in 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king – Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow through public scorn – mud from a muddy spring – Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know, But leech-like to their fainting country cling – Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow – A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field – An army, which liberticide and prey Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield – Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay; Religion Christless, Godless – a book sealed; A Senate – Time's worst statute unenpealed; – Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

Gorgeous helps stop greyhound racing from going to the dogs

Patrick Toohy

An ordinary greyhound adopted by a new television game show for lottery losers is set to become Britain's most famous dog after unexpectedly romping home at generous odds in front of millions of armchair fans.



Star of the show: Gorgeous the greyhound – 7-1 winner

Gorgeous, a previously unknown two-year-old black and white bitch, is the star turn in a Channel 4 series called *Last Chance Lottery* aimed at the vast majority of punters who end up out of pocket every week on the National Lottery.

In its first programme on Saturday night, shown an hour after the main lottery draw, the bulk of the show's £500 "jackpot" was put on the dog at 7-1 in the 9.30 at Harlow.

Overcoming a slow start from trap four, Gorgeous defied the long odds and turned the form book upside down by winning the race by several lengths. The win, only her fourth, was worth a mere £250 in prize money but it netted the *Last Chance* Lottery show a tax-free £2,160.

Her victory was greeted with incredulity by the show's host, comedian Patrick Kielty, and those connected with Gorgeous. "Nobody expected her to win," said Jenni Marsh, the dog's owner. "She certainly didn't have a very good preparation, what with going up and down to the television studios for several days before the race. But on the night she felt right."

She likes being a film star. Indeed, Gorgeous is likely to remain in the limelight for some time to come because the game show plans to chart her progress over the next nine Saturdays at different tracks. "It is a truly innovative piece of TV and greyhound racing has done well to secure some precious prime-time exposure," said Bob Betts writing in *The Sporting Life*, the punter's bible.



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news



Jack Straw

Age 50, Labour, shadow home secretary, NUS president 1969-71. When he was elected it was considered a major breakthrough for the radical student left. Became MP for Blackburn in 1979. Defending a majority of 7,027, he is now better known as a hardliner on law and order.



Stephen Twigg

Age 30, Labour, NUS president 1990-92. Full-time official of the Fabian Society and openly gay candidate standing against Michael Portillo, the defence secretary, in Enfield Southgate. A local boy made good, the Oxford University graduate must overturn a 16,000 majority.



Phil Woolas

Age 37, Labour, NUS president 1984-86. As a student politician he led the battle against then education secretary Keith Joseph's fight to impose tuition fees. Works as head of communications for the GMB trade union. He is fighting a three-way marginal in the new seat of Oldham East and Saddleworth.



Lorna Fitzsimons

Age 29, Labour, NUS president 1992-94. Her greatest moment was her fight with John Patten, then education secretary, over the Education Bill in 1994, when the union was in danger of being closed down. A political lobbyist, she is standing in her home town of Rochdale, a Lib Dem marginal.

Student firebrands come of age

Ian Burrell

The race is on to become the first student leader to take a seat in parliament since Jack Straw, the shadow home secretary, 18 years ago.

Five former NUS presidents are running for election for Labour. The increase in the parliamentary aspirations of NUS presidents is seen as a result of Labour taking control of student politics after throwing off the far left in the early 1980s. One candidate said they were now "coming of age".

Yet while Labour continues

to dominate student politics, it is a former Tory student leader who probably stands the best chance of being elected.

Joho Berrow, 34, is defending a 19,791 majority in Buckingham. He has risen through the Tory ranks after being chairman of the Federation of Conservative Students in its traumatic final years when, beset by feuding, it was dissolved and abolished by the then party chairman Lord Tebbit.

He has maintained contact with most of his Labour student adversaries who he regards as life-long political enemies.

"It is very possible to have civilised debates with these people but I don't expect to convert them," he said. "You have to confront and defeat them. It's a war of attrition."

Of the former presidents, Lorna Fitzsimons is in the best position to follow Mr Straw into Westminster. Contesting a seat in her home town of Rochdale, she has been helped by boundary changes which have cut the Liberal Democrat majority to a couple of hundred.

Ms Fitzsimons, 29, NUS president from 1992-94, is a Blairite now working as a lobbyist

in order to gain a better understanding of the private sector. She said the NUS leaders standing for parliament shared a common heritage. "We are Kinnock babies," she said. "None of us are right-wing but we are all modernisers."

She said that while past NUS presidents sought to influence society through law, journalism or pressure groups, there was now a consensus that change could best be brought about through parliament.

Fighting a much tougher seat, is Stephen Twigg, NUS president from 1990-92, an

openly gay candidate, standing against Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence, in Enfield Southgate. An Enfield boy, he will need more than local knowledge to overturn a 16,000 majority.

Mr Twigg believes Labour is enjoying the fruits of the shake-up in left-wing student politics in 1980 and 1981, until when extreme-left students had dominated the national union. Then Labour decided to break from the Broad Left alliance and since 1982 a succession of Labour candidates has been elected to the NUS presidency.

"What we are seeing is a coming of age of those Labour presidents of the NUS," he said.

Mr Twigg, 30, said the former student leaders could bring a vital injection of youth into Westminster. "There is such a problem with young people's disenchantment with politics and particularly party politics."

Mr Straw entered parliament in 1979. Few other Labour MPs have since cut their political teeth in student politics but that is set to change.

Charles Clarke, 46, who preceded the new wave of Labour

NUS presidents, holding the title from 1975-77, is standing for parliament for the first time in Norwich South, where he defeats a Labour majority of 6,181.

Jim Murphy, NUS president 1994-96, faces a more difficult challenge, overcoming a Tory majority of 11,688 in the Scottish constituency of Eastwood.

But Phil Woolas, 37, president of the NUS from 1984-86 and now head of communications for the GMB trade union, is fighting a three-way marginal in the new constituency of Oldham East and Saddleworth.

In student politics Mr Woolas distinguished himself by leading the fight against the fight of the Secretary of State for Education, Keith Joseph, to impose tuition fees on students.

For the Liberal Democrats, Lembit Opik, former president of Bristol University and member of the NUS national executive, is their best hope of a student leader turning MP.

Mr Opik is defending a 5,209 Liberal Democrat majority in Montgomeryshire, because Alex Carlile, QC, the current MP, wants to spend more time with his family.

Clarke puts his money on delay in single currency

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said yesterday that he would bet against the European single currency being launched on target at the start of 1999.

Told that European commis-

sioner Yves de Siguay had said the currency would start on time, the Chancellor said on BBC television's *First on Sunday*: "He has to say that, doesn't he?"

But Mr Clarke did not rule out the possibility of a 1999 launch, adding: "I'll have a bet with Yves, and he might win his bet. It's just that we've said it's

not impossible that they'll be ready by 1 January 1999, but I hope the commission would agree they shouldn't go ahead on 1 January 1999 if countries are not genuinely convergent and they're taking any risks by going ahead."

An ICM poll carried out for tonight's BBC *Panorama* pro-

gramme shows that while a majority, 54 per cent, of those questioned were opposed to a single currency, 65 per cent felt they were poorly informed.

And 61 per cent said they did not understand the meaning of "convergence criteria" - the economic performance measures that ministers will use to

judge whether countries are strong enough to withstand the pressures of single currency discipline.

The political manoeuvres continued yesterday, with former Europe minister Tristan Garel-Jones arguing there was a cross-party majority of pro-European MPs. Writing in a Sunday news-

paper he said: "What has happened over the past few years is that the minority of anti-Europeans have been able to dominate the debate because the majority have been divided by party considerations."

"The anti will squeal like stuck pigs at this... the anti-European tone of the debate in

Britain is undermining our ability to campaign for and influence the kind of Europe we want."

Mr Clarke also repudiated a suggestion that John Major was opposed to the single currency, following an interview with the *New Yorker* magazine in which he said the loss of control over in-

terest rates was "an argument for never going in, and it's one we'll have to confront at some stage."

Mr Clarke said: "If what you're suggesting is that the Prime Minister is arguing those reasons for never joining, the Prime Minister negotiated... to keep the options open."

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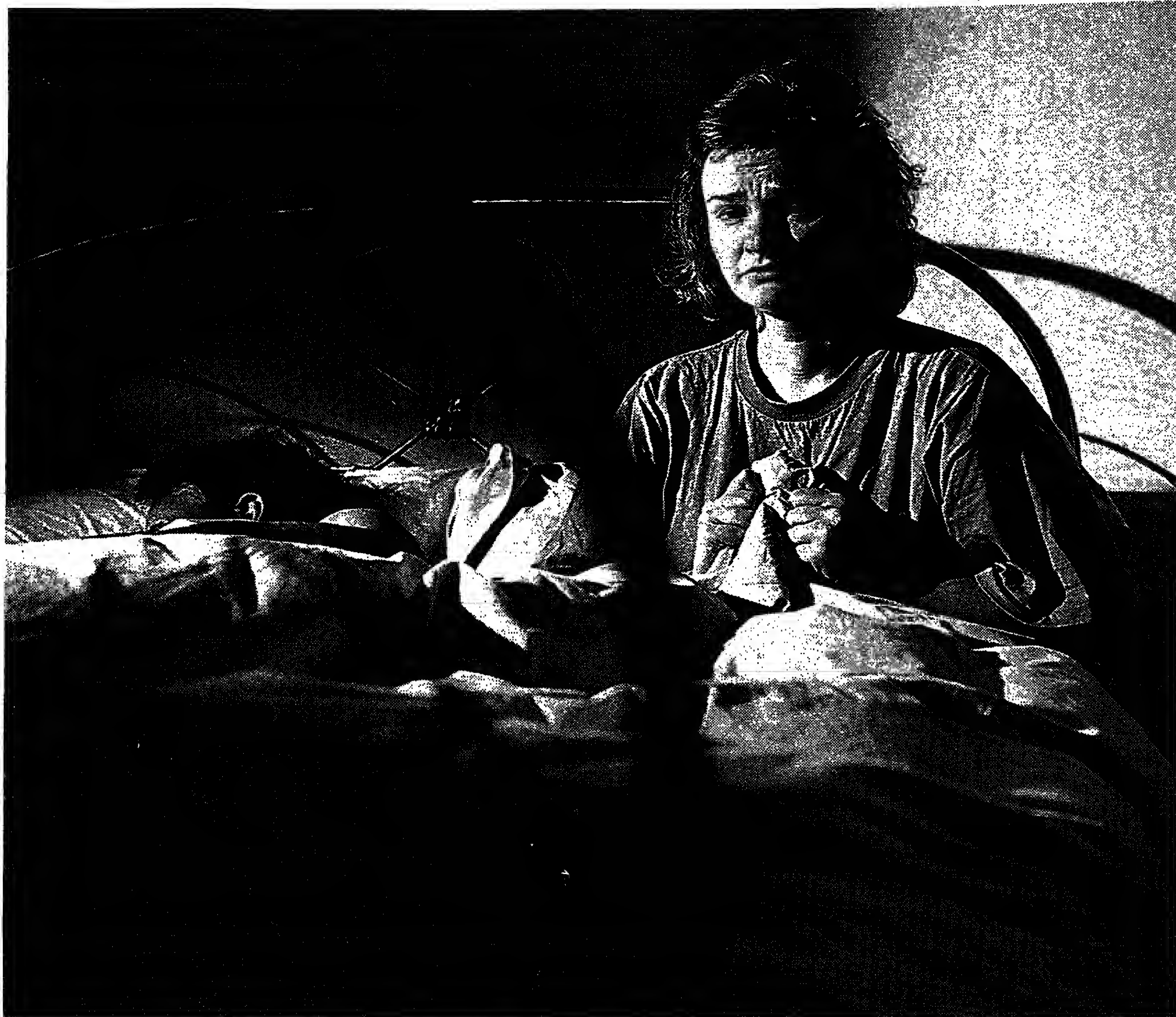
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the Hanratty case



'I'm dying tomorrow, please clear my name'

James Hanratty was hanged for what was dubbed the crime of the century. But he didn't do it, writes **Jason Benetto**



Victims: James Hanratty, above, was adamant right until his hanging at Bedford jail that he had not murdered Michael Gregsten and brutally raped and shot Valerie Storie, pictured being comforted in hospital

On 4 April 1962 James Hanratty, a 25-year-old petty burglar, was hanged – one of the last three people to go to the gallows in Britain.

His alleged crime was to have shot dead a married man in cold blood and then raped his lover before shooting her repeatedly, paralysing her from the waist down.

The evidence presented at Hanratty's trial would almost certainly fail to secure a conviction in a court today. The case against him was at best flimsy, based largely on his identification by the crippled lover, who admitted she only saw him for a few seconds and failed to pick him out on the first police identity parade.

Yet despite almost 35 years of campaigning by Hanratty's family and supporters it is only now that the British justice system seems ready to admit it made a mistake.

Home Office officials are understood to have concluded that Hanratty was innocent. Michael Howard, the Home

Secretary, is shortly expected to announce that he is to refer the case to the Court of Appeal, where the conviction is expected to be quashed.

But Hanratty's supporters will want to know why it has taken so long? Clearly, the wheels of justice often move very slowly. However, a less benign explanation could be that the exposure of one of the country's most infamous executions as a sham is a grave embarrassment and yet another plank in the

Hanratty would also raise the disturbing question: if Hanratty did not commit the murder, who did?

The killing shocked a nation not used to apparently random murders and acts of unspeakable brutality and cruelty.

The victims were Michael Gregsten, 36, a married man – whose regular infidelities were well known to his wife – and his mistress Valerie Storie, 22. The couple had met at the Government's Road Research Lab-

Mr Gregsten's Morris Minor car when there was a sharp tap on the window. Gregsten wound it down to face a revolver. "This is a hold-up," announced the smartly dressed stranger. "I am a desperate man." He then climbed in and ordered Mr Gregsten to drive for about 60 miles through Slough and across the suburbs of north-west London before coming to a halt at a lay-by on the A6 near Bedford, known as Deadman's Hill.

At the end of the two hour trip, he asked Mr Gregsten to pass him a duflie bag. As he did so, he was killed with two shots from the revolver. The murderer then raped the woman on the back seat of the vehicle before shooting Miss Storie repeatedly at close range, paralysing her for life. Afterwards, he fled in the car.

Throughout her six-hour ordeal Miss Storie only once saw the killer clearly – when his face was illuminated by the headlights of a passing car.

After Hanratty's arrest in Blackpool following his "identification" by Mr Gregsten's wife Janet, further investigations discovered two .38 calibre cases from the gun used in the murder in room 24 of the Vienna Hotel in London, where the accused man had stayed under the false name of James Ryan.

In the first identity parade Miss Storie did not pick Hanratty. At the second, she made each suspect repeat the sentence spoken by the killer: "Be quiet, will you, I am thinking." Like the murderer, Hanratty pronounced thinking "finking". After 20 minutes Hanratty was chosen by Miss Storie, who was confined to a wheel chair.

Documents released later showed that Miss Storie admitted: "I may not be able to pick him out. My memory of this man is fading." In addition, two earlier Identikit pictures she helped draw up did not match Hanratty.

Additional evidence against Hanratty was given by Charles France, a criminal, who committed suicide two weeks before the hanging. But it was the vital identification evidence given by Miss Storie that swayed the jury, who after nine-and-a-half hours delivered a guilty verdict.

On the morning of his execution at Bedford jail, Hanratty wrote to his family, insisting he was innocent and asking them to clear his name. His brother, Michael Hanratty, 58, said: "The day before Jimmy was hanged he said: 'I'm dying tomorrow but I'm innocent. Clear my name.' This is what we need to be able to do."

The campaign has gone on ever since and during the past 35 years a wealth of evidence has emerged which supports the claim that an innocent man was wrongly executed.

One of the most implausible and incredible parts of the case against Hanratty is the acceptance that a town-dwelling bit-part criminal should stalk a couple to a cornfield in Berkshire to carry out a random killing.

There was also not a shred of forensic evidence found in the vehicle to link Hanratty.



Defiant: James Hanratty Sr protested regularly outside the House of Parliament, handing out leaflets to passers by, in a bid to clear his convicted son's name over the crime that shocked a nation

Hanratty also had a good alibi. At first he said he had been in Liverpool, but refused to name his friends. Extraordinarily, he changed his statement to say that he had stayed in a bed and breakfast house in Rhyl, North Wales – 250 miles from the scene of the crime. Again no witnesses were provided, but between 1966 and 1971 fourteen people came forward to support his story.

For many campaigners, including the journalist Paul Foot, author of the book *Who killed*

cally, Alphon could hardly drive, but Hanratty was experienced. Alphon also had a striking likeness to the Identikit picture produced immediately after the attack.

In addition, he was seen at the pub where the two lovers met on the night they were abducted. He has been reported as repeatedly admitting his guilt, claiming he was paid £5,000 to break up the relationship between Mr Gregsten and Miss Storie.

Alphon, 66, made an alleged "confession" in Paris several years later saying that he was asked by someone close to Gregsten's family to frighten the couple. However, speaking to the *Independent* three days ago he denied that he had ever admitted to the killing and insisted that Hanratty had been hired by Mrs Gregsten to break up the relationship. "I don't have to prove my innocence," he added. Reports of his alleged confessions had been distorted.

Mrs Gregsten fiercely denied any involvement in a plot during a series of interviews with Paul Foot shortly before her death in January 1995. But she did admit that she was no longer convinced of Hanratty's guilt, pointing instead to Peter Alphon.

The growing doubts and pressure from campaigners and family – who have remained determined even since the death of James Hanratty Sr who protested defiantly outside the House of Commons – led to a fresh police inquiry into the case. Detective Superintendent

This is my son, JAMES HANRATTY, murdered by the state for the A6 murder.

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‘The killing shocked a nation not used to random murders and acts of unspeakable brutality’

argument against capital punishment. Indeed, the Scotland Yard detective who re-investigated the case is understood to have reversed his pro-hanging stance as a consequence.

The posthumous pardon of

oratory, near Slough, where he was a research scientist and she was his laboratory assistant.

The lovers used to rendezvous at a cornfield at Taplow, near Maidenhead, in Berkshire. On the evening of 22 August, 1961, they were together in

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Anarchy stalks Albanian cities as cheated investors vent fury in orgy of destruction

Government unable to maintain order after collapse of pyramid schemes, writes **Andrew Gumbel**

Albania was languishing on the brink of total anarchy last night as tens of thousands of people who had been cheated out of their life-savings took to the streets, tore up paving stones, battled with riot police, ransacked public buildings and started fires, including one that raged through the country's highest petrochemical complex.



Tritan Shehu: Pelted with rocks by the crowd

The wave of popular anger, triggered by the collapse of three of Albania's so-called pyramid investment schemes and fuelled over the past few days by a swelling tide of public protest, seemed to know no bounds. The efforts of President Sali Berisha and his government to bring the country to order had little or no effect.

Between 20,000 and 40,000 people turned up to the Tirana rally - a very large showing in a country gripped by fear of government repression. The then clashed with police as they tried to march from the stadium to Skanderbeg Square in the

centre of the city. For two hours there were pitched battles as the demonstrators hurled stones and pieces of marble paving from the steps of the Palace of Culture. When they attempted to storm parliament, where deputies were meeting in emergency session, they were repulsed by water-cannon and gunshots fired into the air.

There were even more extraordinary scenes over the weekend in Lushnje, a small town about 60 miles south of the capital where thousands of people clamoured for the release of Rapush Xhaferi, the organiser of one of the failed pyramid schemes who was arrested last week in an ill-fated attempt to appease the public.

Believing that the release of Mr Xhaferi, who comes from Lushnje, would be the answer to their problems, the rioters set fire to the town hall, smashed the windows of a state-owned bank, gathered up as many documents as they could find and hummed them in the main square. They also set up barricades of burning tyres on Albania's only north-south main road.

On Saturday afternoon Albania's Foreign Minister Tritan Shehu, the second most powerful man in the country after President Berisha, decided to fly into Lushnje by helicopter to try and calm things down. But as soon as he arrived he was struck on the back of the neck by a flurry of stones, beaten up and dragged off to a changing-room in the local football stadium. At least 10 policemen were also badly beaten.

It is still not clear whether Mr Shehu was kidnapped or whether he hid himself to avoid a public lynching. But it was only several hours later, under the cover of darkness, that he managed to make his getaway and return to Tirana.

Yesterday the mayhem in Lushnje resumed with the ran-



Short-changed: Angry demonstrators carrying an injured protester past a cordon of riot police in Tirana's main square

Photograph: AFP

sacking and burning of the law courts and the comprehensive trashing of the local office of the ruling Democratic Party.

There were similar scenes in Berat, a little further to the south, and in the port of Vlore, Albania's second city, where a crowd of 3,000 torched the town hall in defiance of serried ranks of riot police and a unit of army troops.

The attitude of the authorities has looked nothing short of

blind panic, with President Berisha promising the repayment of all lost investments - a promise that nobody seems to believe - and pledging to launch a full investigation into the financiers he once described as investment experts but now refers to as usurers and criminals.

The pyramid schemes worked rather like a chain letter, with unrealistically attractive rates of interest of about 10

percent per month being maintained only as long as more and more investors came forward to fill the schemes' coffers.

Popular in many parts of Eastern Europe since 1989, they are widely recognised as excellent covers for money-laundering and personal enrichment schemes by public officials and racketeers.

They also have a habit of collapsing all at once, leaving poor investors bereft of what little

hard currency they ever possessed.

In Albania, the schemes and their collapse have been particularly brutal, partly because of the autocratic nature of the regime, which almost certainly approved of, and actively colluded in, them, and partly because of the extreme poverty of the population. Many people sold their houses and valuables in order to take part.

The riots do not, however, ex-

press widespread revulsion at the government as such, but rather an irrational desire by people to fight for what they believe to be their right - the return of their money and the high returns which it was supposed to earn.

Several people who have lost hundreds, or thousands, of dollars in the past few days say all they want is to find a new pyramid scheme in which to pour another pile of money.

Calls for reform increase Turkish tension

Tony Barber
Europe Editor

In a sign of rising political tensions in Turkey, both the Islamist-led government and military leaders have reacted furiously to a proposal from some of the country's leading private businessmen for sweeping democratic reforms. "Cheap political heroism" was the derisive phrase used by one military officer to describe the report presented to parliament last week by the Turkish Association of Industrialists and Businessmen.

Among the report's recommendations were more-effective protection of the civil rights of ethnic Kurds, shorter periods of prison custody to prevent police torture and other human rights abuses, and the subjecting of the military high command to defence ministry control. The businessmen also proposed the abolition of the national security council, a powerful institution which ensures the armed forces considerable influence over certain areas of government policy.

Military officers, quoted anonymously in the Turkish press, dismissed the report's proposals as based on a "lack of knowledge" about the true state of affairs in Turkey. But liberal Turkish and foreign commentators said the businessmen had clearly touched a raw nerve.

The armed forces have seized power on three occasions since 1960, ostensibly to defend the modern secular republic against political enemies. The army has remained a powerful presence in the wings since 1983, when it last returned power to civilian politicians. It plays a particularly important role in determining policy in the civil war that has raged since 1984 in the mainly Kurdish south-east of Turkey.

The businessmen's report also attracted criticism from the Turkish government, a coalition of the Islamist Welfare Party and the centre-right True Path Party. The trade minister, Yalim Erez, said the report had been produced by "intellectuals who do not know the realities of this country".

However, the armed forces and the Islamists have not always seen eye to eye since Necmettin Erbakan, the Welfare Party leader, came to power last June as Turkey's first Islamist prime minister since the establishment of the secular republic in 1923. But, as far as the Kurdish war is concerned, Mr Erbakan, like his secular predecessors, has essentially left the army with a free hand to crack down on the rebels.

The report was by no means the first such appeal for more humane treatment of Kurds and for a political rather than a military solution to the war. A similar report, commissioned by the Union of Chambers and Trade Bourses and published in 1995, said that support for the far-left Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) would diminish if the government tackled the grievances of ordinary Kurds.

More than 21,000 people are estimated to have died in the war since 1984.

Prize battle strips Academy of all honour

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

It is hard to imagine what Calixthe Beyala and the Académie Française could possibly have in common. She is a winsome black woman writer, 40, from French Guiana, in her thirties with a certain iconoclastic bent. The Academy is the perpetuating and predominantly male club of France, great and good which stand guard over France's scholarly tradition. But it was to Beyala that the Academy awarded last year's prize for the best novel, a work called, prophetically, *Some, Lost Honours*.

Now, both the Academy and Beyala are in the dock. They, for having put the weight of their authority behind a plagiarist. She, not just for plagiarism, but also for recidivism.

The first aspersions on Beyala's work were cast by the satirical, investigative weekly,

le Canard Enchaîné, in early 1995, when passages from her book *Little Prince of Belleville* were compared with very similar passages from novels by two American writers, Howard Buten and Charles Williams, which had sold well in France. Pierre Assouline, editor and director of the glossy, books monthly, *Libre*, took up the cudgels. For him, Beyala's artistic integrity, or lack of it, has become something of a crusade. He calls it persecution.

Last May, after months of bitter allegations and counter-allegations, the first victory went to her detractors. In a lawsuit brought by Howard Buten's French publisher, Beyala was found by the court to have "partially copied" his novel. She and her publishers, Albin Michel, were ordered to pay a total of 100,000 francs (£11,000) to Buten, his translator and his French publisher, Le Seuil.



Calixthe Beyala: 'Can no one who was born in a shanty town be fully recognised as a writer in Paris?'

The case, according to Mr Assouline, bore more resemblance to a seminar on comparative literature than a court of law. Under pressure from her publisher, it was said, Beyala decided not to appeal. Mr Assouline has since found

passages and episodes from Beyala's work that appear to have been culled from other several works, including Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*.

Paule Constant, the French author of a novel called *White*

Spirit has added her voice to the accusations. At first, she told *Libre* magazine, she did not want to believe it. "But when I examined the text, whole passages of my book sprang out at me from the mould that imprisoned them."

Although Calixthe Beyala did not formally contest the verdict of the court, she was forthright in defending herself outside it. She talked about "coincidence" and scenes half-remembered. She accused her detractors of spite and suggested she was being singled out for criticism because she was a woman and black.

After the court's judgment, however, there was general surprise that Beyala's most recent novel, *Lost Honours*, was even nominated, let alone shortlisted, for last year's prestigious Académie Française prize. When it was pronounced the winner on 24 October, there was consternation.

Some of the judges defended their choice by citing what they called "a very French tradition from La Fontaine to Proust" which had left the border between borrowing and pastiche "poorly defined". "Everyone takes their inspiration from everyone else," was another defence.

Reviewing the selection process in the just-published February issue of *Libre*, Pierre Assouline renewed his campaign. If this year's prize had to go to Albin Michel, he said - alluding to the alleged "share-out" of prizes among the publishers that publisher had more than one entry.

"But," he went on, "for reasons that would seem not to have much to do with literature, it had to be Beyala and no one else" and he accused "certain members of the Academy" of using "all their talents and social graces" to win over the rest. Others talked about the

"susceptibility of some judges to female charms".

Now Mr Assouline claims to have found striking similarities between passages of Beyala's winning novel and Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*. She responded with charges of misogyny. This weekend, though, she was stung into giving a long, rambling response which was published in the daily *Figaro*.

Addressing the problem of apparent borrowings from other works, she says her novels (10 so far) derive from the African "oral tradition" where existing ideas and phrases are repeated and embellished. She refers to herself as a "mere woman", accuses Mr Assouline of bounding "a poor black come from nowhere" and says her experience makes her wonder whether anyone "born in a shanty-town" can be "fully recognised as a writer in Paris".

There, for the moment, the case rests.

Justice holds death in the wings

BEIRUT DAYS

The last time we saw Moeen Oseiran, he was smiling - pale but smiling - as he lay in the American University Hospital, exhausted after another blood transfusion for leukaemia. He knew he was dying but insisted on living, asking about events in southern Lebanon, Bosnia, Algeria and far more important to him - turning up at the high court to fulfil his role as a judge, the Lebanese Third Appellate Chamber.

We gave him some copies of *L'Express*, *Liberté*, *Paris Match* - his French was better than his English - a left hint to what was his friend penultimate hospital visit before his final court appearance and his death.

A small, rather gruff man, Moeen was for the courts. In a land where - in the words of one local academic - officials have in the past proved themselves "messengers of corruption", has incorruptible. At the be of the 1975-1990

civil war, he could be found walking across the front line, under shell fire, from his home in west Beirut to the court chambers in the east. He refused a government-offered Mercedes, preferring his old Peugeot. For years, he declined a bodyguard, only accepting one in the last weeks of his life - provided the soldier never carried a gun. He even refused the small red badge on his registration plate that would have allowed him to overtake traffic jams and parking restrictions. "In the courts I am a judge, but in the street I am an ordinary man," he used to tell us.

Defendants and governments alike found Moeen Oseiran a prickly character. When the cabinet expected a guilty verdict in the case of Yehya Chammas, an MP accused on drug-related charges, Moeen Oseiran ordered a re-trial. When the Americans expected a conviction of two men accused of kidnapping the US Ambassador Meloy in 1976 - found murdered three days later - he freed both of them on the grounds that they were covered by a post-civil war amnesty, that they had not murdered the ambassador and that

the real killer had died in a subsequent bomb explosion in Paris. Moeen was a canny man who knew his politics. When the anti-Syrian Phalangist militia leader Samir Geagea was put on trial for his life, charged with the brutal killing of his Christian rival Dany Chamoun, Moeen declined the court headship because his workload was "too heavy". Friends say he believed

that however guilty Geagea proved to be, the case was political. But when we turned up for press passes to the Geagea trial and found ourselves stymied by unhelpful court bureaucrats, Moeen scribbled a tiny note and the same func-

tionaries, awed by his signature, gave us permission in less than 30 seconds.

In his last days, he was confronted by lawyers acting for a financial institution accused of fraud who knew that he was dying of leukaemia. Indeed, in one of his last appearances, Moeen could be seen, sitting in his red, white and black judge's robes, wiping away a nosebleed as his brain haemorrhaged.

But, as the lawyers tried to spin out their case, the judge increased the speed of the hearings. And a few days before he died, Moeen was able to declare the bank guilty. Maybe his father Mourir, a Shia Muslim prelate, had something to do with it. "I know I am going to die and my conscience is clear," the 62-year-old judge told his family in the two years after his leukaemia was discovered.

He refused to die in hospital - he had a phobia of being slotted into a refrigerated mortuary - so he finally died in a coma in his own bed in his faded, noisy, almost street-level apartment off Corniche Mazraa, a judge to the very end. His military bodyguard, still unarmed, came to pay his respects. President Elias Hrawi bestowed upon Moeen a posthumous Commander of the Order of the Cedar, a kind of Lebanese OBE.

The Oseirans, it should be

Robert Fisk

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Israeli police to investigate political graft case

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

Israeli police yesterday started an investigation into corruption and deal-making in the appointment of the attorney-general, which could bring down the government.

At the heart of the scandal is an accusation by the Channel One television station that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, nominated Roni Bar-On, an obscure party loyalist, as

attorney-general to allow a political ally of the government to escape corruption charges.

Mr Bar-On's appointment was greeted with astonishment and derision by the legal profession and senior judges, who forced him to resign after 12 hours. It was reported that two-thirds of the cabinet had never heard of Mr Bar-On, but it was the one third who knew him who voted against him.

Last week state-owned Israeli television said his appointment

was made after he promised to arrange a plea bargain for Aryeh Deri, leader of Shas, a party with 10 members in the Knesset, who is on trial for corruption. In return Mr Deri promised to support the Hebron agreement, leading the scandal to be called the "Bar-On for Hebron" affair.

Mr Netanyahu and his government denied any such deal. The television reporter has yet to explain the source for her claims, but may be forced to do

so by the police investigation. In general terms there is little doubt the government wanted to get rid of the previous attorney-general and replace him by somebody more malleable, but it would be surprising if they made a specific agreement with Mr Bar-On.

In its seven months in office the government has proved accident-prone and Mr Netanyahu has made several bizarre appointments. His first choice as justice minister had to

withdraw, accused of making false statements to the Supreme Court. His office director was alleged to have a long record of making harassing calls to women. Other right-wing leaders are in trouble, such as Ehud Olmert, Mayor of Jerusalem, who is on trial for fraud.

Mr Netanyahu has accused Channel One of extreme bias against him.

Rafik Halabi, editor of its nightly news, said he was confident. "We will take this all the

way," he said. "I'm not concerned, I'm not scared and I'm not worried. We will protect our sources, but will act within the confines of the law."

Senior members of the government appear to lack confidence in what Mr Netanyahu's kitchen cabinet - often compared to that around President Richard Nixon - might have got up to. Natan Sharansky, the Trade and Industry Minister, said yesterday: "If there was any kind of bargain, I recommend

to everyone involved to admit it and resign, because this is an unprecedented crime." Avigdor Kabalani, Internal Security Minister, said: "If the affair is in fact as it appears, there is no doubt that this government has no future."

Mr Netanyahu himself called for a police investigation. But he has moved in the past few days from total denial to qualified denial, saying that if there was any deal, he did not know about it. It turns out that his own

choice for the position of attorney-general - an important job in Israel, since whoever holds it acts like a special prosecutor in the US - was Dan Avidan, Mr Deri's lawyer, who turned down the job.

There is no doubt that Mr Netanyahu wanted an attorney-general he could control. But his political future may depend on whether he or anybody in his government ever spelt out what they expected Mr Bar-On to do for them.

Moscow nervous as Chechens vote for new leader

Had you asked anyone in the snow-clad streets of Grozny one year ago if they would be going to the polls today to determine the leader of what is, in all but law, their own nation, they would have laughed bitterly.

A year ago war, launched in late 1994 by Boris Yeltsin in a bid to crush Chechnya's independence, seemed doomed to grind on, adding noughts to the many thousands already on the death toll, while the rest of the world turned a blind eye.

Yet - six months after an unexpected peace deal - Chechens will today vote in the first round of an election to choose a leader from a list of 13 candidates, all of whom are separatists. Moscow is looking on in a state of nervousness, mindful that the final results could bring a disaster.

One of the two considered most likely to go through to the second round are Aslan Maskhadov, the former Chechen fighters' chief of staff, who is seen by the Kremlin as a moderate. But the other is Shamil Basayev, the guerrilla commander whom Russia still regards as its most wanted terrorist.

The election appears to have all the hallmarks of a genuine contest. Citizens of Grozny, once buried under rubble, have been engulfed by a tide of promotional literature, posters and rhetoric.

Every night Chechens have been settling down to watch hour after hour of election programmes, shot on shaky video cameras, on five channels.

All over Grozny the inhabitants of bombed out apartment blocks sit glued to unedited speeches, campaign rallies, discussion programmes. The city may have no running water, piles of fetid rubbish, no jobs, and precious few intact buildings, but it can at least lay claim to a highly educated electorate.

"We just want people to be able to choose," said Abdul Sin-

We will insist on being acknowledged as an independent sovereign state

barigov, a 31-year-old Chechen businessman, as he sat in the shell-scarred ninth floor apartment that is also the headquarters of AS, his two-man TV and radio station. (So named because of his initials.)

After the August peace deal, Mr Sinbarigov invested \$70,000 (£42,000) in electronic equipment, got a temporary broadcasting licence, and set about filling the airwaves with election-related programmes in the hope of persuading his countrymen to make the "right" choice. "If they don't, there won't be any more TV stations here, there will just be war," he remarks gloomily, as the sound of Rod Stewart's "You're the Star" boomed out from his radio station in a nearby bedroom.

The right choice, in his book, is Basayev. "He is able, pure and clean," he remarked, sitting beneath a sketch of a fanged and red-nosed Boris Yeltsin. References to Basayev's raid on a southern Russian town in which he seized more than 1,000 hostages, or his bank robberies, or aircraft hijacking, are waved away. "If you think he was a terrorist, then a million times more terrorist acts were carried out by the Russians."

It appears this sentiment is catching on. The 32-year-old

Russia's most wanted terrorist is among the candidates, writes Phil Reeves in Grozny

Basayev, who has swapped his military fatigues for a sober grey coat, has proved a surprisingly effective campaigner.

The several thousand Chechens who turned out on Saturday to hear him speak, surrounded by gunmen, in Grozny's bullet-strewn central square listened in rapt silence, interrupted only by a rumble of laughter. Basayev is fond of jokes.

His rise is causing concern among his opponents. Islam Yaxiev, an aide to Chechnya's interim president, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev - another leading contender - refused to answer questions about the guerrilla leader yesterday, beyond repeating: "The Chechen people will choose the President, and will continue to build an independent state."

Overriding everything is the desire for legitimacy. The candidates say they will work together, no matter who wins. The republic is desperate that the world should recognise the poll as the first step to nationhood. Some 60 international observers have arrived, despite the still unsolved murder by gunmen of six Red Cross workers as they slept in their beds in a rural hospital.

But recognition will be far harder if Basayev is the victor. In Moscow, there will be a howl of fury from the generals and opposition politicians who have long condemned the peace deal as a capitulation to criminals and terrorists. And there will be widespread allegations that the elections were illegal.

Leading politicians have already made that claim, citing the fact that many of the 300,000

Chechens living outside the republic as refugees will be unable to vote. Polling booths will be set up near the Chechen border in neighbouring republics, but not, for instance, in Moscow.

But Russia's long-term response is harder to gauge. The Yeltsin administration is unlikely to want to get embroiled in another crippling war, and will not want to send troops back into the republic, no matter how great the political pressure to do so.

Both Chechnya and Moscow both need a lasting agreement over the strategically crucial oil pipeline, which runs through the republic, and will transport Caspian oil to the West. But striking any kind of relationship will be extremely difficult.

That could however, be true, no matter who wins. Russia continues to maintain that Chechnya will remain part of the federation, although a final agreement on its status has been deferred until 2001. Yet if there is one thing that all the presidential wannabes agree on it is that the issue is already all but settled. "We will insist on being acknowledged as an independent sovereign state," said Aslan Maskhadov yesterday. And he is the moderate one.



Rite of passage: Young men waiting to take part in a traditional ceremony of initiation in the village of Taung in South Africa's North-West Province. More than 2,000 young men and 400 young women took part in the ceremony after passing their tribal examinations. Photograph: Reuters

China plays its press card with HK

Teresa Poole
Peking

The unpredictable nature of China's legal system was again exposed at the weekend when Peking unexpectedly paroled a Hong Kong newspaper journalist who had served three years of a 12-year sentence for "stealing state secrets".

When the harsh sentence was originally passed on Xi Yang, it was interpreted as a blunt warning to Hong Kong reporters that the territory's press freedoms did not extend to the mainland.

Saturday's release of Mr Xi was similarly seen as a political

decision, this time an attempt by Peking to try to calm the mood in the colony after a week of rising anger over China's plans to scrap key parts of the Bill of Rights after 1 July.

Mr Xi, a mainland living in Hong Kong, was arrested in October 1993 after writing an article for his newspaper, *Ming Pao*, about China's interest-rate policy and planned gold sales. In many countries it would have been considered a scoop, but Mr Xi was tried and sentenced in March 1994.

There was no news at the weekend on the fate of Tian Ye, a People's Bank of China official who was sentenced to 15

years for providing information to Mr Xi, but he is unlikely to have received similar leniency.

The Chinese government maintains that the judicial system is completely independent of the government, but several well-timed releases in recent years have occurred at politically advantageous moments. In 1993, just before the international vote to decide whether Peking would host the year 2000 Olympics, China's leading pro-democracy activist, Wei Jingsheng, was paroled. The following year, in the run-up to Washington's decision whether to renew China's most-favoured nation trading status,

the activist Chen Ziming was let out of prison.

This time, the official Xinhua news agency said Mr Xi had been freed on probation because he "showed signs of repentance".

Having decided to release him, the Chinese authorities moved swiftly. *Ming Pao's* chief editor was told on Thursday that a release might come "fairly soon".

On Saturday morning, Mr Xi was informed that he was being paroled, and by the evening was back in Hong Kong.

The release was welcomed in Hong Kong from both ends of the political spectrum. But its

seemingly arbitrary nature is unlikely to put people's minds at rest about human-rights protections and freedom of the press after Hong Kong returns to China in five months. The Hong Kong Journalists Association called Mr Xi's parole a positive signal, but added: "We always believed Xi Yang was doing his job as a professional journalist and his imprisonment was unwarranted."

Earlier this month a Chinese court refused parole for Yao Yu, 52, a mainland journalist who in 1994 was sentenced to six years for articles she wrote for the Hong Kong media. Ms Gao is suffering from ear

ailments. Peking's tolerance for journalists who stray from the official line remains virtually zero. President Jiang recently described reporters as "engineers of the human soul".

In keeping with this approach, China yesterday published new directives for China's journalists on how to report news. Journalists should promote patriotism, collectivism and socialism, "uphold the truth in news", and also protect the secrets of the party and the state. As Mr Xi discovered, those who misjudge what the government considers secret will pay a heavy price.

Peking begs citizens to return Ming bricks

Teresa Poole

There are many uses for a Ming dynasty brick, and most of them no longer involve encircling a Chinese city.

Three decades ago, Chairman Mao's government knocked down Peking's historic city wall to make way for the second ring road. Resourceful local residents spirited away some of the rubble, turning the 50lb blocks into everything from door-stops to kitchen walls and bomb-shelters. Now, the cultural relics authorities are asking Pekingers to hand back their booty, and thousands of bricks from the old Ming city wall - more than 30,000 so far - are reappearing so that one small part of the past can be put back together again.

At the designated collection site, the bricks are arriving by bicycle, tricycle cart, and sometimes taxi. Call a hotline number, and Qi Kusun at the state-run Peking Antiquity Reconstruction Company will leap into his blue truck (its banner reading: "Love the old capital, give back the city wall") and come to pick up your bricks.

Mr Qi has developed quite an eye for Ming masonry. "These ones aren't bad!" he exclaimed after being summoned to a building site in western Peking. Chipping off ice, he showed how the stamp on the side of each brick identified the year of production and the firing kiln. Zhang Lailong, whose hovel was next in line to be demolished, said his family had long ago acquired three old bricks. "They



City's renewal: A construction worker taking a break at the site of the 15th-century Bell Tower which is being restored along with Peking's ancient wall and several other historical landmarks. Photograph: Reuters

were put under the bed to make it more stable," he said.

Mr Qi's unit is run by the Peking Cultural Relics Bureau which recently launched a plan to renovate and extend a stretch of the city wall just east of the main railway station, one of the few places where anything is left. Even these precious remains had been set for demolition by a Sino-Dutch building project, until a sharp-eyed Chinese man

working nearby wrote to the local newspaper to alert people. Public sentiments were roused, the bulldozers halted, and the official call went out for the return of old bricks for the re-building and an associated museum project.

The Peking wall originally dated from 1267 when the conquering Mongols built a new city with earthen ramparts. A century later, the Ming dynasty

rulers built new north and south walls around a smaller settlement, and then in 1420 also enclosed the east and west Mongol walls with brick. The resulting structure was made up of an earthen centre up to 10 yards wide, with brick exteriors two yards thick on either side.

Anyone in Peking over 40 has fond memories of the wall. Michael Crook, a Briton who grew up in Peking, recalled it

in the early Sixties: "On the way home from school, we used to climb up and look about on the top of the wall. It was all very pleasantly dilapidated and overgrown with bushes and jujubes."

The demolition teams struck in 1965, when the government gave the go-ahead for the new ring road. The half-mile long stretch which is the focus of the renovation project, is the inside

brick casing of one section of the former east wall.

Mr Crook who has carefully researched the wall's history, is concerned that the few remnants are preserved rather than reconstructed. "I'm terribly worried that they might decide to restore it or renovate it, while what really needed is protection."

"My theory is that China is still very poor in another 20 or 30 years the authorities would have the resources to do things properly. In the meantime, the less one touches, because the brick record has been patchy, the people's notion of preservation is to tear the whole thing down and rebuild with new materials."

Behind all this propaganda, the campaign to old bricks does seem to have touched a chord with the people of Peking. There have been 2,000 calls to the hotline to arrange collection, and dozens of people have struggled themselves to deliver back heavy slabs. The only reward for donors is a certificate.

Liu Jincai, 54, who lives near the old north-west corner of the Ming wall, took his bicycle to rescue 20 bricks from nearby building site. "I called the hotline almost every day. There are a huge number of old bricks at the building site. I am afraid the big machines will destroy them and take them away as waste."

His wife laughed: "My husband gave the go-ahead for me to go to the site to pick the bricks. But I'm not quite keen!"

صكنا من الامم

West gives Mobutu green light to unleash dogs of war in Zaire

Off the record, the Western diplomat is blunt. His country is not generally in favour of refugees suffering or dying but in this case one must consider who they are.

More than 200,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees were this week trapped in the heart of the Zairean jungle when Zaire finally launched its mercenary-led counter-offensive against the Rwandan-backed rebels who have captured a huge swathe of eastern Zaire.

Congregating around the towns of Amisi, Tingi Tingi and Shabunda, weak after trekking hundreds of kilometres west through the bush, they are surviving on supplies which have been flown in by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

While the UNHCR lobbies the international community, the rebels and Zaire to rescue them, there is little sign that anyone is prepared to help. It is quite different from November last year, a month into the rebellion, when the world clamoured for action to save more than a million Rwandan Hutu refugees trapped in eastern Zaire and a multi-national UN force was poised to intervene.

The crisis "ended" with the awesome spectacle of 700,000 refugees spontaneously making their own way back across the border. The world breathed a sigh of relief and switched its television sets off. Those now trapped in the Zairean jungle are the rumour that walked against the tide.

Regime's bloody counter-offensive enjoys world's discreet backing, writes Mary Braid in Kinshasa

Although the plight of the Hutu refugees attracted worldwide sympathy, they were regarded with ambivalence by many observers in the Great Lakes. Their flight to Zaire followed the 1994 Hutu genocide of 800,000 Rwandan Tutsis. The UN refugee camps became the base from which those who were guilty of genocide plotted to recapture Rwanda from the new Tutsi-led government. The Rwandan government hacked the rebellion in eastern Zaire to eradicate the threat on its doorstep.

In his plush Kinshasa office, the Western diplomat admits that among the refugees now languishing in the jungle there are innocent children and adults. "But there are many, many Interhamwe" [the organisers of the genocide], he says, "people who have trekked into Zaire because they can never go home." Why, he implies, should he care?

Now that the world is not watching, the question appears academic. It is convenient to shelve the vexed issue as the stakes rise in the Great Lakes. With the launch of the government counter-offensive, led by



Trapped by fighting: Rwandan Hutu refugee children waiting this week for UNHCR aid to reach Tingi Tingi in eastern Zaire

Photograph: AFP

200 to 300 foreign mercenaries and two battalions of Angolan Unita rebels, more than 700,000 people in eastern Zaire were reported to be on the move. The likelihood of a regional catastrophe, which threatens to engulf the whole of central Africa, has increased.

In Kinshasa, some diplomats say a Great Lakes war, pitting Rwanda and Uganda against Zaire, is already clandestinely under way, and that the uprising in eastern Zaire was only a smokescreen for a Rwandan attack.

This theory is being advanced now with greater vigour than before. The rebels, under Laurent Kabila, an opponent of Zaire's corrupt dictator, General Mobutu Sese Seko, are rubbished; the capabilities of the thuggish Zairean army, which is under new leadership, are being played up. The conflict is reported to be escalating, with



Mobutu: Put mercenaries in charge of revamped army

Uganda and Rwanda sending in reinforcements to meet the counter-offensive.

This new, stronger line from some Western governments contrasts with the feelings of most ordinary Zaireans. At first they demonstrated against Mr Kabila, who was denounced as a Rwandan puppet by the

Mobutu regime. But now they mostly believe the rebel movement is homegrown and that Mr Kabila is a national hero.

But then the West has made an art form of being out of step with popular feeling in Zaire. For years it propped up the Mobutu regime, sending in troops to crush popular revolts, although it was obvious that the dictator was bleeding the former Belgian colony dry.

Today Zaire has no infrastructure. Entire regions are virtually autonomous tributes or payments to Kinshasa are made simply to keep Mr Mobutu's mafia at bay. The people are among the poorest in the world. Yet the West still chooses to put its faith in the Prime Minister, Kengo wa Dondo, an unpopular figure since the ailing President engineered his election during a brief visit home from France, where he is being treated for cancer.

"When the state is collapsing you hang on to institutions that still exist," another diplomat explained. But Mukendi Malumba, chief adviser to the main opposition leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, says the West is naive to think Kengo wa Dondo will ever hold fair elections.

Tense times have resulted in diplomatic feuds. Dan Simpson, the US ambassador to Zaire, recently accused France of neo-colonialism in Africa. The French, who to their shame supported the Rwandan Hutu regime which committed the 1994 genocide, claim the US supported the Tutsi-led Rwandan government in its surrogate aggression against Zaire.

The row was smoothed over during diplomatic discussions in Paris two weeks ago. The overriding common interest, it was agreed, was to maintain the existing borders. These were drawn up at the 1878 Berlin con-

ference, when Europe carved up Africa, ignoring the existing tribal and language groups. Richard Cornwall, of the Africa Institute of South Africa, compares the Zairean state to blanchmange. "You try to grab but there is really nothing there," he says. "But the fiction of the state has to be maintained, or else a whole can of worms is opened and no one wants to deal with that."

One theory portrays the giant, tottering state of Zaire as a territorial buffet table at which the nine countries on its borders are feasting. Now that Rwanda's original aim, the neutralisation of the Hutu threat, has largely been achieved, it might be expected to withdraw.

In order to prevent regional chaos, the international community will be willing to sacrifice the refugees, human rights and the democratic aspirations of Zaire's people.

New UN chief facing old cash dilemma

David Usborne
New York

For Kofi Annan, the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, the visit to Washington last week was a jolly round of receptions, audiences and intense media attention. President Bill Clinton received him in the Oval Office and Senator Jesse Helms, the UN's curmudgeonly nemesis, had some kind words.

To an extent, the visit must be judged a success. Mr Annan has put his reputation on the line promising to propose a comprehensive package of UN reforms by the summer. He has also fully engaged Washington on its responsibility to deliver the other side of the bargain: to pay up its back dues to the UN, worth over \$1.3bn, and thus relieve the organisation's financial crisis.

That this is going to be a hard trick to pull off is evident. But as Mr Annan flew back to headquarters last Friday he must have pondered that something worse than failure might happen - that the demands coming from Capitol Hill may ignite months of dangerous argument between the United States on the one hand and the rest of the UN on the other, with him, all reasonable, in the middle.

For example: Mr Annan suggested during a speech to the National Press Club in Washington last Friday that the US might be allowed to lower its long-standing 25 per cent share of the regular UN budget. If it could persuade other member states to acquiesce, "The formula is not sacrosanct," he intoned. "The United States can negotiate a lower rate for itself." That came only a day after Mr Helms, dawdling with reporters outside the White House, had mused about those "European countries that are so critical about us". Perhaps, he said, it was time "we looked at what they contribute".

Mr Annan conceded another point to Mr Helms. The senator is promising to table draft legislation on the Hill as early as next week laying down what he called "benchmarks" of reform that the UN will have to meet before Congress will consider relinquishing monies to pay back its UN arrears. And Mr Annan has agreed to receive staff members from the senator's office in New York this week to discuss what the legislation might look like.

Defensive UN officials insisted that Mr Annan has little choice but to show accommodation to the US. Mr Clinton, they said, urged Mr Annan to make friends with as many people as possible on Capitol Hill. After all, it is the members of Congress who are refusing to pay the UN. The administration is fully aware of the damage being done to its influence in the UN.

Mr Annan's overtures are certain, however, to make some of the 184 UN members nervous, if not livid. The US, after all, does have a treaty obligation to pay its dues on time. Why, other countries will wonder, the special treatment for Washington? Mr Annan's agreement to see staff from Senator Helms's office came only hours after he told an editorial board of the *Washington Post* that he would not deal directly with officials from member state parliaments, only with national missions established in New York, he said.

The idea of "benchmarks" will not sit well with any other state, Britain and France among them. For benchmarks read conditions - conditions on fulfilling a treaty requirement. Questioned in a corridor of the Senate last Thursday, a UN staff member described the Helms demands as being "sticky" for Mr Annan and that he was going to have to walk "a fine line". Indeed,

with HK

New Delhi smokers coughing mad as city boss bans their fix

Jan McGirk
New Delhi

Smokers in New Delhi are having a collective nicotine fit. Ever since the Indian capital's chief minister, Shri Singh Verma, made it his New Year's resolution officially to ban tobacco in public, smokers have been savouring their last legal puffs at the office and plotting how they can get through a normal day without lighting up in view. The ban started yesterday, and violators risk paying up to a 500 rupee (£10) fine, equivalent to a week's average wage, if they are caught.

Elderly men, who often while away the winter afternoons by pulling their rope beds into a patch of sun in the alley and passing around a hookah, accosted Mr Verma in anger to demand that their tradition be respected. But he was adamant: no hookahs, no hubble-bubbles, no *bidis* (cheap leaf-wrapped smokes), no pipes - absolutely no nasty nicotine habit can be indulged within the city limits, except in private.

Pessimists predicted productivity would decline as addicts slipped out for their fix. From now, Delhi's smokers

must stub out their cigarettes in offices, hospitals, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, schools, stadiums, hotels, banquet halls, railway stations, airports, and all public transport. Jaded smokers say they'll ignore the ban and, if caught, cough up a small bribe, less than the fine. A few smokers, mainly women who have been trying to quit, welcomed the laws.

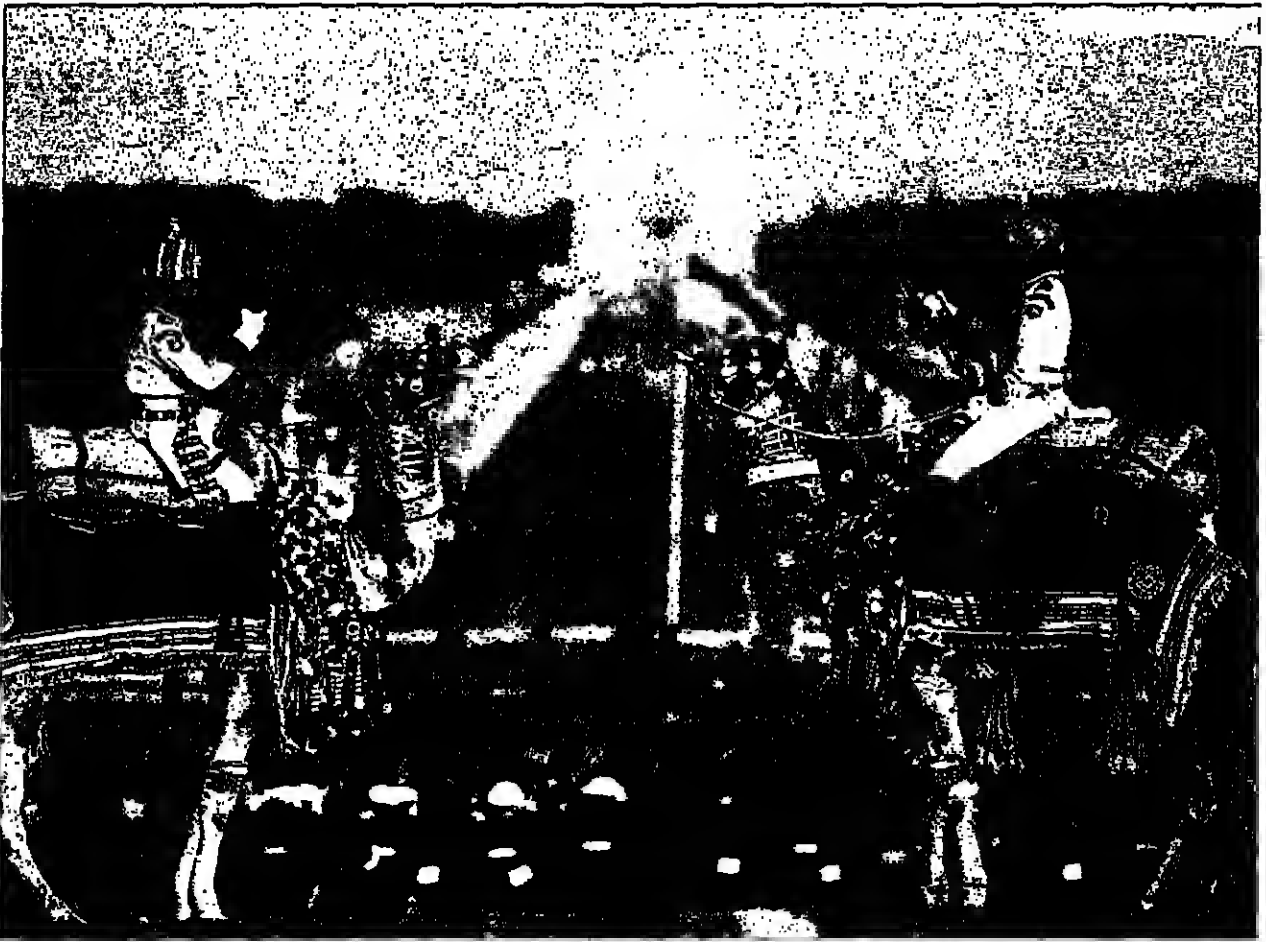
Thronging the route yesterday to watch the Republic Day procession march towards the arch of India Gate seemed more jittery than usual. "Fifty years of freedom? Not really," said a business student, Ashwin Chandok. "Today we can't even smoke outside. Well, they've just lost my vote."

Many residents ridicule the law, especially after environmentalists said last month that simply breathing the air of New Delhi was the rough equivalent of smoking 12 cigarettes a day. While the Health Minister, Harsh Vardhan, said at least 30 per cent of his budget went for treating smoking-related diseases, and that nearly 1 million deaths across India were linked to tobacco, smokers said their contribution to overall air pollution in New Delhi must be

laughably small. Doctors at Delhi University blamed the poisoned air, which makes the number of respiratory patients 12 times higher than the national average, and said almost a third of New Delhi citizens suffer from some sort of respiratory complaint. At least 7,500 deaths in New Delhi each year are attributed to pollution.

"It's absurd to ape the West and ban cigarettes here," said Farsh Singh, a chain-smoking air stewardess. "You go to New York and it looks like there is some invasion of afternoon streetwalkers, until you discover that it's just the secretaries hanging around outside to smoke during their coffee breaks. India's not like that. With all of Delhi a public place because so many people live in the streets, this ban is impossible to enforce."

Kiran Bedi, a former inspector-general of prisons, tended to agree. She outlawed tobacco three years ago at New Delhi's Tihar jail to try to improve health conditions, but found the 8,000 inmates would go to any lengths for a cigarette. "They resented my no-smoking rule terribly, although it was the best thing for them. They



Getting the hump: Rehearsals for the Republic Day parade, which is now a no-smoking event

Photograph: Reuter

craved tobacco and would risk severe punishment for a single cigarette. Criminals would refer to tobacco as 'the beloved'.

"I feared they might riot before they would comply with my new health regulations," Fires broke out when smokers rigged the prison wiring to light their illicit cigarettes after Ms Bedi

banned matches as well. An anti-smoking campaign is about to be launched by volunteer agencies, but few expect it to make any real headway. Meanwhile, local environmentalists are concerned about the lack of enforcement of anti-pollution legislation already on the books. This has failed to curb an in-

crease in New Delhi's vehicular pollution or hazardous industrial wastes. Loopholes abound: tens of thousands of kerosene-powered generators kick in daily during frequent power failures and must certainly pollute the air just as much as the ancient two-stroke engines on motor rickshaws or

the dung fires that help warm the pavement-dwellers.

For now, the only legal smokers in New Delhi who can light up in public are sadhus, the wandering Hindu mystics who are allowed to pass their bearded-filled *chillams* with impunity. This week, they are the envy of the strung-out smokers.

Scandal of the street children that shames Kenya

Homeless teenagers living in fear of brutal treatment meted out by authorities, writes David Orr in Nairobi

Joseph Mwangi and his teenage friends are terrified of being arrested by the police. Their crime is to live rough on the streets of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. Mostly they are picked up in ones and twos but, occasionally, there is a full-scale swoop. There was one the other day but everyone in Joseph's group managed to escape. They know what fate awaits them if they are caught and charged with vagrancy.

So far, Joseph, aged 17, has spent only one period in detention but he says it was the worst experience of his life. Last year, he was sent to the capital's notorious Industrial Area Remand Prison pending investigation of his case.

By the time he was released two and a half months later, he had suffered serious mental and physical abuse.

It is not rare for juveniles to be sent to adult remand prisons in Kenya.

During their time in detention, Joseph and the three other boys with him - all in their early teens - were regularly beaten by the other inmates. So overcrowded were the cells, they had to sleep on a latrine floor covered in human waste.

"In the remand prison, the adults steal rations from the younger ones", says Joseph, seated under a tree in Uhuru

Park, central Nairobi. "To get it back, they are forced to do sexual things with them. Adults rape the younger ones and if you refuse you're beaten."

Joseph belongs to a group of more than 30 street kids known as the Cathedral Children. Each lunchtime they gather in the park in front of All Saint's Cathedral. The Anglican pastors give them food, their only solid meal of the day.

There are more than 10,000 street children in Nairobi alone. Most of them seem to come from poor, single-parent families. However, it is not just economic factors which push

them on to the streets. The Cathedral Children, who mostly belong to the majority Kikuyu community, became homeless in 1992 after clashes in central Kenya between their people and warriors from President Daniel arap Moi's Kalenjin tribe.

In September of last year, soon after Joseph was released from the remand prison, a street kid known as Kajunia was shot dead by a police reservist in Uhuru Park. Kajunia was Joseph's best friend.

Near the spot where the Cathedral Children wait for their daily hand-out runs a foul open sewer. According to

Joseph, Kajunia was whipped as he emerged from the sewer where he had gone to relieve himself. Then he was shot at point-blank range in the throat.

"The *afande* just fired his gun straight at Kajunia", says Joseph, using the Swahili term of respect for a policeman.

"He fell down in the water with his hands still raised in surrender. Then the *afande* spat on him and walked away. I was also beaten but I managed to escape. The *afande* is still around. He still comes after us and tries to beat us."

Joseph's testimony will feature in a forthcoming report on

Kenya's street children by the New York-based human rights organisation, Human Rights Watch.

The report, which follows an inquiry into the juvenile justice system and police violence against street children, is likely to prove a damning indictment of institutionalised abuse of young people in Kenya.

"The police seem to think that all street children are thieves", says Elizabeth Oyugi of African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect.

"The children don't stand a

chance, they're condemned from the start. Most of them complain of having been beaten by the police."

The network estimates that as many as 120 street children appear before Nairobi's juvenile court each week. For boys the charge is usually vagrancy, for girls loitering with intent. Children who plead not guilty are remanded in custody.

"In court they're treated like criminals", says Mrs Oyugi. "The justice system is extremely intimidating. They don't get a lawyer to explain to them what's happening."

Children of 16 and even

younger are being sent to the Industrial Area Remand Prison which is for adults. The conditions there are appalling, mainly because of overcrowding and inadequate rations.

According to recent estimates, as many as five people a day are dying of disease in the prison. When questioned about conditions in Kenyan prisons, the former home affairs minister, Francis Lotodo, replied: "A prison is not a hotel."

It is only through the reports of former inmates like Joseph Mwangi that it is possible to get information on Kenya's prison conditions. Human rights organisations, journalists and lawyers have been refused free access to the prisons.

significant shorts

Czech Republic in line to join Nato, Havel says

The Czech Republic might be invited this summer to join Nato, President Vaclav Havel said yesterday. "Everything suggests that certain countries... including the Czech Republic... might be directly invited at the summer summit in Madrid, and the process of admitting new Nato members would thus be launched," he said during a radio broadcast. His remarks followed a meeting with the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who was in Prague to sign a declaration on Czech-German reconciliation last Tuesday. **Reuter - Prague**

Arson suspected in karaoke fire

Fire inspectors on Sunday sifted through the debris at a Hong Kong karaoke club gutted in a fire which killed 15 people, and police said they were investigating a possible organised crime link to what appeared to be an arson attack. Initial reports said the fire may have been started by a petrol bomb tossed early on Saturday on to the first-floor stairway of the Top One Karaoke Bar in the Tsui Sha Tsui district of the Kowloon peninsula. **Reuter - Hong Kong**

Taliban steps up expulsions

Afghanistan's Taliban militia is continuing to expel civilians from the strategic Gulbahar district north of the capital Kabul to prevent any uprising, a Taliban commander and civilians said on Sunday. "We have told people to leave the area because they pass on military information to our opposition and to prevent any kind of revolt against our Taliban brothers," the militia's frontline commander, Mir Ahmad, said. **Reuter - Gulbahar**

Madagascar cyclone kills 6

A cyclone that hit Madagascar has left at least 6 people dead, another hundred missing and 30,000 homeless, the Interior Ministry said yesterday. **Antananarivo - AP**

Peru rebels release hostage

Marxist rebels holding hostages in the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima freed General Jose Rivas Rodriguez, a deputy chief in the Peruvian national police, early yesterday. The sick officer was wheeled out of the compound on a hospital trolley flanked by Red Cross officials and Bishop Juan Luis Cipriani. **Reuters - Lima**

Accidental death of an anarchist comes back to scandalise Italy

Andrew Gumbel
Rome

It was a crime that defined a generation. The shooting of police commissioner Luigi Calabresi in Milan on 17 May 1972 took place against an extraordinary backdrop of ideological struggle and murky violence that brought Italy to the brink of democratic collapse. The affair soured the innocence of the 1968 student uprisings, prefigured the terrorism of the Red Brigades and gave the first hint of a sinister collusion between the Italian state and various criminal underworlds.

Extraordinarily, it is also an issue that has roared back to life in the past week. Nearly a quarter of a century after the fact, and following seven trials and appeal hearings, three men have been sentenced for ordering and carrying out the killing of a man who was once the most hated policeman in Italy.

Italy's High Court ruled last Wednesday that Adriano Sofri, Giorgio Pietrostefani and Ovidio Bompressi - all of them former members of a prominent left-wing agitprop group called Lotta Continua - were to be denied any possibility of further appeal and sent to prison for 22 years apiece. The problem is that almost nobody in Italy believes them to be guilty, and even fewer believe they should

be made to pay for the follies of an era that by now is almost a whole generation in the past.

It has been an astonishing spectacle, as political parties on all sides have tried to use the case for their own campaigning purposes and a beleaguered judiciary has lamely sought to defend a case with more holes than an Emmentaler cheese.

The original story will be familiar to anyone who saw Dario Fo's hit play *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*. In the winter of 1969 some shady right-wing organisations responded to a rash of mass industrial unrest with a series of bombings, including an attack on a bank in Piazza Fontana, Milan, that killed 16 people and injured nearly 100.

We now know that the bombings were part of a deliberate "strategy of tension", orchestrated by some sections of the political establishment in collusion with the secret services to counter the rise of the New Left in 1968 and scare voters away from the Communist Party. At the time, though, it was far from clear who was responsible for the attacks, and a massive disinformation campaign was launched to pin the blame on left-wing anarchists and groups such as Lotta Continua. One anarchist, Pino Pinelli, was detained without due legal process for three days at the central police station in Milan, at the end



The murder scene: Commissioner Calabresi was shot dead outside his flat in Milan in May 1972

Photograph: UPI

of which he fell to his death from the window of Commissioner Calabresi's fourth-floor office. At first it was asserted he had committed suicide, then that he accidentally fell while smoking. Of course nobody ever believed such preposterous assertions. Lotta Continua (the name

means Continuous Struggle) launched a vicious counter-campaign accusing Calabresi and his colleagues of torturing and murdering Pinelli before throwing him out of the window. Unfortunately they had not a shred of proof, and before long the case landed in the courts where the judiciary dutifully fudged it and - years later, when the fuss had died down - shelved it altogether.

When Calabresi was shot outside his home in broad daylight, suspicion immediately fell on Lotta Continua but no case could ever be made against any of the organisation's members who were arrested sporadically over the next few years. By the turn of the 1980s the crime had turned into yet another unsolved Italian mystery, the authorities gave up hope of ever bringing the commissioner's assailants to book.

But then, out of the blue, something very odd happened. In the summer of 1988, a petty crook and one-time Lotta Continua member, Leonardo Marino, turned himself in to the police, saying he had taken part in Calabresi's murder. The hit-man had been Ovidio Bompressi, he claimed, and the men who had approached him to take part were Sofri and Pietrostefani - leader and deputy leader of the now long-defunct Lotta Continua.

Marino's confession struck like a bombshell, not least because Sofri and Pietrostefani had become highly respected figures in their respective chosen fields of journalism and social work. But as the case unfolded, it also started to look

highly suspect, as Marino's testimony betrayed more and more inconsistencies and became bogged down in ever more tortuous contradictions. He claimed to have driven the getaway car, but slipped up on details such as the colour of the vehicle and the route he

much else in this murky affair, has no evidence to support it. Much of Italy has watched aghast as successive court hearings have rubber-stamped Marino's version of events and dismissed the credibility of other evidence in surreal fashion (one witness who said he saw a woman driving the getaway car was disregarded on the grounds that he was colour-blind).

The final High Court verdict has sparked a wave of national revulsion including sentiments of scarcely concealed contempt from government ministers. Only the far-right National Alliance came out in praise of the ruling.

The left sees the affair as a continuation of an ideological struggle that should by rights have subsided along with the end of the Cold War, while the followers of Silvio Berlusconi and his centre-right party Forza Italia have used the case as another stick with which to beat the Italian judiciary. Marino's confession, they argue, is exactly the sort of unreliable evidence used to nail politicians and businessmen during the anti-corruption wave of the early 1990s and has parallels, they say, in the various criminal cases at present being brought against Mr Berlusconi himself.

As for the defendants, Sofri and Bompressi were escorted to jail this weekend and Pietrostefani, who lives in Paris, announced he would be returning to Italy shortly to share their fate. Their only hope now is a presidential pardon - rare in Italy, but something that in the present climate of indignation they may yet be granted.



Calabresi: Once the most hated policeman in Italy

took away from the scene of the crime. Two eye-witnesses said the driver had been a woman, and others gave an account of how the murderer got in and out of the car that jarred completely with Marino's version.

Perhaps most seriously, Marino failed to mention - until his own parish priest inadvertently revealed it in court - that he had spent three weeks in unrecorded talks with the police before beginning his formal deposition. Friends of Sofri and Pietrostefani have suspected ever since that a plot was hatched with the police to take belated revenge on the Lotta Continua leadership, a theory that is widely believed but which, like so

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SUNALLIANCE

But who will deliver a real choice of schools?

New Labour: old school tie. The Prime Minister's crude and personal attack on Tony Blair is a better guide to the election battle over education than any waffle about "super-schools" which may emerge from today's all-day Cabinet thrash on the Tory manifesto. The Government purports to be concerned with parental choice and standards, but the party's instincts are altogether cruder. In the election campaign we will be presented with Honest John from Brixton, who wants educational opportunity for all, against a Labour leader who enjoyed the benefits of an elite education himself, but who wants to confine them to a hypocritical, middle-class minority.

This plays on some of Labour's more visible inconsistencies. But will it work? We hope not, because it is a debased distraction from the real issues. And we do not believe that it will, because the dissonances in Mr Major's position are too deafening.

First, he hated school himself and left at the age of 15 without an O-level to his name. If he is to use his own humble origins as a model, his manifesto should propose correspondence courses in hanking for all.

Secondly, he sent his son and daughter to private schools, which is rather more relevant than where either he or Mr Blair went to school themselves. Mr Blair's choice of school for his sons is controversial only in relation to Labour

policy; in relation to responsibility for the state schools used by nine-tenths of the population, Mr Blair and his colleagues are rather better placed to preach about "opportunity for all".

So let us hope that the education debate in this election will not be about mites, beams and intermediate-sized pieces of wood in the eyes of politicians. Unfortunately, today's discussions on the Tory manifesto seem unlikely to take us further forward.

Gillian Shephard's plan for "super schools" is simply an old, unfulfilled Tory pledge dressed up, that popular schools ought to be able to expand. No one has an ideological objection to this, but there are practical difficulties in allocating more money to successful schools and taking it away from sinking ones.

Her other suggestion for the manifesto – the present draft is a rather thin document, if this is any guide – is to get round the problem of parents who persistently vote against schools opting out of local council control. She wants to copy Labour's plan for "foundation" schools, a half-way house between autonomy and direct rule by education authorities.

This should prompt us to ask more fundamental questions. The truth is that both the Conservatives and Labour are incoherent on the subject of parental choice. The Tories have little to say to the parents of children who are likely to be rejected in a more selective system, while Labour has a strangled message for

parents whose children currently enjoy the benefits of partial selection. These parents happen to include Mr Blair himself, Harnet Harman and many of the middle-class voters of Wirral South (by-election pending) whose children go to its two grammar schools.

Both parties are haunted by ghosts. Mrs Shephard has boneheaded traditionalists looming over her shoulder, who simply will not accept that a return to the 11-plus would be divisive and unpopular. Meanwhile, David Blunkett, her Labour shadow, is haunted by Graham Lane. Mr Lane may not be well known, but we all recognise him

nevertheless. He is chairman of the metropolitan councils' education committee. He is the embodiment of Hattersleyism, the belief that the Local Education Authority knows best. And he has been frightening *Daily Mail* and *Sunday Times* readers by threatening to end selection in the 161 state schools which still practise it.

Hence Mr Blunkett's statement yesterday that he would veto plans by local councils to ballot parents on the future of grammar schools. If Labour wins the election, that should keep the Tory switchers of the leafy Wirral happy.

But it does not resolve the dilemma

of parental choice. By the exercise of millions of parental choices (including the choice of where to buy a house) over the years, this country's schools are being more and more polarised into good and bad. This is starkly revealed in the findings of the Social Market Foundation study which we report on page 1 today. The Government is hoist by its own league tables. Parental choice is clearly an important principle in a free society, but it cannot be a policy for raising standards across the board.

It is to the question of raising standards for the middle and the bottom of the range of schools that our politicians should speak and act. And it is here that this newspaper gives Mr Blunkett the edge over Mrs Shephard, because she has too often been bogged down – as today – in administrative quagmires.

We accept that it may be easier to sound constructive about standards in opposition than in government, but equally the Conservatives simply have to accept responsibility for the present state of our education system. Of course, it should not be forgotten that most parents are broadly satisfied with their children's own schools, but there can be no doubt that the system as a whole has underperformed, is underperforming and must do better.

That is why, with all parties claiming to put education at the top of their list, only the Liberal Democrats can be credited with meaning what they say.

"Will the parties spend more on schools?" was one of the eight key election questions which we asked at the beginning of this month. Only Paddy Ashdown has answered it. Mr Blair's promise to shift resources from social security to education may be better than a poke in the eye, but it cannot sustain "education, education and education" as the three priorities of a Labour government. From the Conservatives, however, all we have is a slap in the face with the old school tie.

The winged god who got the boot

So farewell then, Mercury. Clever, Saren't they, these marketing people? Obviously, really, that everyone thought Mercury was a winged god and a planet, and had never heard of the telephone company. And as for the new brand name, "Cable & Wireless Communications", now that has a ring to it! "Just make sure you hit the Cable & Wireless Communications button on the fax before you send those 200 pages to Kuala Lumpur, Dave." You can almost hear the snappy dialogue of the new television adverts. Still, we hope they don't skimp on changing the logos. There's nothing quite so sad as a new logo that costs less than £50m.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Oxford dons call for peace in East Timor

Sir: East Timor is one half of an island in the easternmost part of the Indonesian archipelago. Originally a Portuguese colony, it was invaded by Indonesia on 7 December 1975 to prevent its independence under the left-leaning East Timorese Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin), and has since witnessed one of the worst genocides in post-war history with an estimated 200,000 of its original 700,000 population being wiped out by war, famine and disease, equivalent to the United Kingdom losing the entire population of Greater London and the home counties following a nuclear attack.

Two decades of military occupation, "transmigration", and the imposition of Indonesian language and culture have resulted in what the East Timorese Council of Priests has termed a form of "ethnocide". In their words: "What we are witnessing in East Timor is an upheaval of gigantic and tragic proportions... To kill the culture is to kill the people."

Thanks to massive Western support, Indonesia has been able to act with impunity: torture, arbitrary arrests, imprisonment without trial, "disappearances" and massacres have been common, one of the most notorious being that at the Santa Cruz cemetery just outside Dili on 12 November 1991, when Indonesian troops fired on mourners protesting at the death of an East Timorese youth, killing over 250. In November 1992, the chief resistance leader, Xanana Gusmão, East Timor's Nelson Mandela, was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The recent award of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize to the Bishop of East Timor, Mr Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, and the principal foreign affairs spokesman of the resistance, José Ramos Horta, has drawn renewed international attention to East Timor.

At a time when the 30-year-old Suharto regime in Jakarta is confronting the problem of succession, the East Timor issue is coming back to haunt the Indonesian generals. No longer a mere "pebble in one's shoe" as the Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas once described it, East Timor has become a veritable boulder, threatening to split Indonesia itself apart.

Cognisant of the United Kingdom's long-standing ties with Indonesia, ties which go back to the very inception of the Republic in August 1945, we call on the British government to assist the search for peace in East Timor and the process of regime change in Indonesia itself by embarking on an urgent review of HMG's sales of sophisticated weaponry to the Indonesian Government.

High on this list of weapons are the latest batch of 16 British Aerospace (BAe) Hawk ground attack/trainer aircraft, which have recently been licensed for export to Indonesia and for which no reliable guarantees have yet been received regarding the prohibition of their use against civilian targets in East Timor.

As such a crucial moment in the modern history of Indonesia, when every effort is being made, under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, to find a solution to the long-running issue of East Timor, we believe that the cause of peace can be best served by imposing a moratorium on further arms sales



Indian children like vegetables

Sir: Professor Hastings' call for a change in the "cultural position" of vegetables ("... but the carrots may taste of prawn cocktail", 22 January) is more easily said than done, given the reference to "gruesome greens" in your leading article.

There would have to be a seismic shift in British culinary habits and attitudes to vegetables, to hiring about the view that a good meal should consist of an assortment of vegetables and lentils with some meat in addition.

In India, which is probably the only country in the world that offers a highly evolved and self-sufficient vegetarian cuisine, children are rarely averse to vegetables and the large variety of greens are never "gruesome". Each vegetable (quite a few unheard of in Britain) is prized for its distinct flavour and other properties and would not be subjected to brutal boiling, except for potatoes and other root vegetables. Vegetables should be slowly braised and flavoured with a few herbs and/or whole spices to make a delicious dish.

Would the average Briton believe that a vegetable tasted different according to whether it had been chopped, sliced, diced, cubed, shredded, puréed or left whole in cooking? Or that there is sheer poetry in the stacks of succulent vegetables on offer at an early morning vegetable market in India?

Vegetables deserve tenderness. MALATHY SITARAM Swindon, Wiltshire

Royal yacht costs less than Clinton

Sir: Our American correspondent Elizabeth Clarke (letter, 25 January) is dumbfounded that £60m should be spent on a royal yacht. Well, there are some of us here who are pretty surprised that her countrymen spent about £500m on last year's presidential campaign.

Some years ago it was reported that it cost more to keep the presidential jet, Air Force One, in service for a year, than the cost of the entire British monarchy for the same period. There must be causes in the United States on which this money could be better spent. DONALD FOREMAN Secretary, The Constitutional Monarchy Association London, E4

Sir: So we're buying a boat! At £60m to build, plus millions in running costs, it will apparently be good for jobs, create a source of national pride and have many spin-off benefits (report, 23 January).

Cuning nearly half a billion pounds from government spending on housing in the last budget was "sound financial management". I thought that a better housed nation was a healthier and more secure one. Perhaps I'm missing something. BILL PAYNE Chartered Institute of Housing Coventry

Sir: Since 1979 we have been led to believe that "privatisation" is central to Tory party beliefs. Evidently, in the matter of the monarchy ("Taxpayers buy the Queen a new yacht", 23 January), the Tory party believes in "nationalisation" – state subsidy of public services. Party of principle? STEWART WILLS Bowdon, Cheshire

Sir: Richard D North's attempt to defend fox-hunting, which he admits is "irrational" (23 January), in no way lessens my objections to this so-called sport. No civilised society should condone anything which deliberately promotes delight in death, be it human or animal. I recognise that some wild birds have to be culled and that farmers have the right to protect their stock from predators, but this should be done professionally by a cold-eyed, licensed farmer or marksman.

Like many others, I find the sight of hunters snipping from the stirrup cup before setting off, giving gleeful shouts as they pursue a lone, defenceless animal, often attending a merry hunt ball afterwards, utterly repulsive. It is akin to the primitive instincts which made a ghoulish public flock to the burning of witches and public hangings. BRIAN ROBERTS Frome, Somerset

Cash crops cause water crisis

Sir: In your important front-page lead "World is running out of water" (25 January), you end by suggesting that global water shortages result from the need to feed a fast-growing world population. Yet it won't have escaped readers' notice that the crop you previously referred to is not a food at all, but Egyptian cotton.

The world's agribusiness conglomerates would like us to believe that the root problem is one of producing food for the hungry. However, it is cash-cropping that causes the greatest hardship and ecological damage.

Christian Aid, Cafod and Safe have long united in condemning this pernicious practice, whereby poor countries cut down forests and divert precious water resources to grow cash crops such as coffee, tobacco, sugar or chocolate, which they sell on the world market for a pittance.

When we made our BBC2 documentary *Sex, Drugs and Dinner*, coffee farmers in the Dominican Republic showed us how they were being forced by low prices to turn to new higher-yield coffee plants which demanded more water and light – ie yet more deforestation and costly irrigation. It's an oft-quoted statistic that half the children in Ghana are starving, and half the land is growing chocolate for export to us. As you point out, Egypt is already a

heavy importer of foodstuffs and it is cash-cropping, a con-trick which promises riches and delivers hunger and destruction. CHARLIE HARRIS Footloose Films London NW3

Sir: Your report "World is running out of water" (25 January) points out that farming consumes most of the water used by humanity. This is one of the many environmental reasons to end livestock farming and eat a largely vegan diet.

In the West it takes, on average, 25 gallons of water to produce a pound of wheat, but 2,500 gallons to produce a pound of meat (Joni Seager, *The State of the Environment Atlas*, Penguin Books, 1995). Livestock farming is also one of the biggest sources of water pollution.

RICHARD MOUNTFORD Birmingham

Sir: If the world is running out of water, should it be in private control? REG HANSELL Shepherdswell, Kent

Labour lesson

Sir: I wonder if Tony Blair is aware of the long-term damage being done to his party by his current policies? In my son's primary school there is a "Demon Eyes" poster and, underneath the slogan "New Labour. More Homework". MICK WRIGHT Bury, Greater Manchester

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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essay

Here's how, Tony

Gerald Kaufman, former Labour minister under Wilson, has some tips for Tony Blair and his would-be cabinet



Yes, Prime Minister: Gerald Kaufman with Harold Wilson at the Labour Party conference in 1966

Whitehall is busy. Civil servants are working flat out for two Cabinets. They are, with all proper conscientiousness, carrying out the duties assigned to them by John Major and his ministers. They are also preparing for the eventuality of a Labour victory in March, or April, or May. If Tony Blair and his team do take over, awaiting them the very moment they walk into their offices will be Briefs for Incoming Ministers.

Civil servants have studied Labour policy documents intensively and will be acquainted with the contents of those documents more thoroughly than the very Labour politicians who wrote them - let alone the many more Labour politicians who were supposed to read them, but may just possibly not have done so. At an early meeting with civil servants after Labour won in 1974, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Harold Lever, noticed that several of those civil servants were brandishing copies of the Labour manifesto. This notoriously laid-back politician pleaded: "I've always wanted one of those. Can you get me one?"

Primed to the eyebrows, civil servants will be able to advise Labour ministers on how to be efficient administrators. They will be completely unquipped

to guide those ministers on how to be effective members of a successful administration. Whitehall mandarins are masters of the arcane of inter-departmental minutes and "submissions" - the quaint soubriquet for the documents that civil servants send to ministers rather than to one another.

They do not have the faintest idea of how to operate - let alone manipulate - the political process. Yet it is as politicians that Tony Blair's lot will be judged.

So let me offer a few handy rules for members of Labour's shadow administration, to cut out and paste on to the red boxes that they will soon proudly - indeed, let us make no bones about it, ostentatiously - be flaunting.

1 Beware the disease of Departmentalism. As members of Labour's shadow front bench in opposition, you at present see each other all the time. Some of you even talk to one another. At any rate, you get the opportunity to do so. In government, ministers are split up and kept away from each other, each batch sequestered in a separate departmental building.

Unless extremely strong-minded, you may come to regard life in these buildings as the be-all and end-all of your existence. Yet, out there is the rest of the government and,

believe it or not, the real world. Ministers should understand that the success of their own department's line, in isolation, may not only not be the best for the government and the people, it may in fact be the worst.

One colleague in the Labour government, involved in a dispute with me over policy, demanded that we meet not in my department but in his, or at any rate on what he called "neutral ground". I pointed out that we were not participants in some armistice negotiation, but colleagues who should be co-operating for the common good. This idea, at first quite novel to him, eventually made sense: we came to a decision that was good for thousands of workers (and, incidentally, or not so very incidentally, good for the Government).

2 Beware the disease of Ministerialitis. After 18 years of being an opposition dogbody, getting to be called "Minister" numerous times every day may give you ideas above your station. Being a minister is an honour, but it is an honour that has come your way fortuitously and

may equally fortuitously be taken away.

When John Parker, MP for Dagenham, became the first member of Clement Attlee's administration to be sacked, Parker had the temerity to ask Attlee why. Attlee, notably tactful, mumbled, "Not up to the job."

Being up to the job as a minister involves remembering that there is a whole universe that does not care (or even know) whether you are a minister or not - unless you actually do something which improves that world, however marginally, or unless, by being big-headed or incompetent, or both, you do something that infuriates the world.

3 Remember you are an MP. Quite near to your Department is the House of Commons, filled with hundreds of colleagues in your own party who believe, quite possibly rightly, that it is they and not you who should be the minister. Ted Leadbitter, MP for Hartlepool and nemesis of Anthony Blunt, was convinced that he rather than anyone else in the world ought to be Secretary of State for Defence. Frank Forney, obscure (though not obscure enough) MP for Hammersmith, in the interstices of blackguarding homosexuals and demanding the death penalty, never forgave Harold Wilson for not making him Foreign Secretary.

So treat your MP colleagues courteously, and pay grave attention to what they say, even if it is nonsense. At night, as you glide by the taxi-stand in your ministerial limousine, stop and ask backbenchers if any of them are going your way. After all, they have stayed late to vote to sustain the government of

which you and, by perverse ill chance, not they, are a member.

4 Remember you are Labour. Some ministers believe that their appointment to office requires them to abandon anything so pretty as partisan considerations. Yet what was the point of your party winning the election, if not to offer something distinctively different from that of your rejected opponents? So remember that your party exists and should be headed (even if not invariably truckled to).

Spread the word about the Government's high qualities (and your own concomitant virtues) among the party membership in the constituencies. You will find them predominantly sane, quite frequently sensible and sometimes possessing better ideas than your own. It was a group of party supporters, brought to meet me from Bristol by Dawn Primarolo, who gave me ideas for a Defence Diversification Agency to deal with the industrial consequences of disarmament.

5 Remember your constituents. They elect you. They can get rid of you. Do not take them for granted. One of my wise parliamentary colleagues made the point succinctly: "You can be an MP without being a minister, but you can't be a minister without being an MP." One young fellow, appointed to junior ministerial office by Jim Callaghan, told his constituents that he would henceforth be seeing less of him. When the opportunity arose, at the very next election, they decided to see nothing of him at all and removed him from what had seemed to be a safe seat.

Returning from a ministerial

trip to the United States to attend a tenants' association meeting in Manchester, I was told by one of my forthright female constituents, "I saw you on TV gallivanting in America." She then added, supplying the ultimate accolade: "Still, I've got to say it, we do see you here."

6 Be boss. By this I do not mean that you should be dominating, swaggering, bullying. Such attitudes get you nowhere, jeopardise your civil servants' loyalty, and are demeaning. On the other hand, civil servants' advice is not gospel. It is the best that can be proffered by individuals who are clever and experienced but who may not necessarily know what will work or what will be politically acceptable.

Always listen to advice but do not necessarily follow it. Only bad ministers blame the Civil Service, because only bad ministers let themselves be dominated by the Civil Service. After Labour lost in 1979, one former junior minister whined that he had been forced to answer written parliamentary questions in a way he had not wanted to. I found this odd, since ministers have to sign all such answers. Who had gripped his hand while he signed, I wondered.

Stephen Dorrell and Douglas Hogg got into such a mess about BSE because they listened to official advice without making a political judgement about the advice. John Major wrote me a partially untruthful letter on arms to Iraq - it featured in the Scott inquiry - not because he wanted to lie, but because he took at face value an official draft which was economical with the truth. As a minister you will certainly make lots of mistakes. It is better to

make your own mistakes than someone else's.

7 Never take no for an answer. The official machinery has the capability to stitch ministers up. If you want to make a spending commitment and your own civil servants do not like it but cannot talk you out of it, they will be on like lightning to their counterparts in the Treasury. When you write to the Chief Secretary for authority for this expenditure, those Treasury counterparts will draft a letter for the Chief Secretary to sign turning you down.

Go and see him and try to talk him round. If he is adamant, take the matter to a Cabinet committee. Before the meeting, canvass every member of the committee. I am not talking theory here.

A few months ago I flew back from Edinburgh in the company of a Tory member of the National Heritage Select Committee aboard British Aerospace's 146 feeder-liner. I pointed out to him, smugly, that we were aboard that particular plane because of me. Officials both at my own Department of Industry and at the Treasury had assured me that this project, then embryonic, had no commercial future. Using the tactics recounted above, I nevertheless got approval and finance for it. The BAe 146 is now a winner, selling all over the world. I have been paid no commission.

8 Remember you are politically mortal. Believe it or not, even when you are riding on cloud nine after first being appointed, after you have scored a huge parliamentary debating success, after you have done well at question time (in

the Commons) or on *Question Time* on the BBC, the day will come when you will stop being a minister.

If you disregard some of my rules you may be forced to resign (David Willetts being a signal example). If your face does not fit, you may be sacked. This happened to Douglas Jay as President of the Board of Trade. Harold Wilson decided Jay should go and told him so in his considerate way. Next day, Jay telephoned Wilson and announced that he had decided he would prefer to stay; Wilson had to explain that things did not quite work this way.

9 However you go, do not be bitter. The Commons has too many MPs who are bitter because they were ousted from junior opposition frontbench posts; bitter because they were not appointed to ministerial office, however lowly; bitter because they did not get the government job they wanted; bitter because they did not become Prime Minister. It is tedious for their colleagues and sad for them. So, remember that you are still an MP, which in itself is a huge honour, not to be attained by thousands of aspirants in the forthcoming general election.

Value the moments of glory you enjoyed. Bore those around you, as long as they will tolerate listening, by retelling your experiences. When everyone you know slides away at the start of a sentence beginning "When I was a minister", find a complimentary publisher and write a book. You might even call it, somewhat arrogantly, *How to be a Minister*.

Gerald Kaufman's book, *How to be a Minister*, is published on 3 February by Faber & Faber.

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Questions for Chris Evans? Start here

I am pleased to say that I have been able to hire, at enormous expense, the services of Chris Evans in writing today's column. Chris Evans is currently unemployed, so we feel that both sides will gain from this arrangement.

Today Mr Evans has agreed to kick off by answering some of the questions sent in by readers about showbiz and the media.

All yours, Chris, and thanks for agreeing to rescue this column!

Dear Chris Evans, I wonder if you can help me, in the light of your recent experiences?

I am at present Prime Minister of your country and under the rules of my contract I have to resign in a few months' time and reupple the job. I would like to get the job again, not particularly because I enjoy doing it, but because it is getting a bit late for me in life to get another decent job and this is the only thing I do well, if I could be said to be doing it well, and I certainly think I am.

However, if I fail to get the

job I would then be appointed Leader of the Opposition, but there is a very real danger that my supporters would come to see me as a bad luck charm and turf me out on my ears.

Even worse, they might turf me upstairs into the House of Lords as a peer, only for the new Labour prime minister to abolish the House of Lords and me with it! Well, obviously it would be pretty humiliating for me to have to get shot in the back by the Tories - and the Tories are pretty good at getting rid of leaders when they are past their has-been date, witness Mr Thatcher and Nicholas Scott etc - and as you are an expert in being hired and fired, I wonder what advice you might give me? If I fail to rejoin my job as PM, should I go before I am pushed, as you did? Should I stay on as Tory leader, but ask for Fridays off? Can you help?

Chris Evans writes: No. Fiss off. Next please.

Dear Chris Evans, I would welcome your advice on a long-term contract I once ill-advisedly entered into and now cannot get out of. The thing is, my name is Ted



Miles Kingston

Hughes (yes, I have a Welsh surname like you, though no Welsh accent - again like you) and being something of a brilliant poet I landed a job as Poet Laureate, a job which entails writing a set of verses on notable royal occasions. At the time I thought it would be a doddle to turn out the occasional bit of doggerel every time the Queen Mum husied another 10 years, but it has turned out to be a real grind. I ran out of ideas years ago and still I have to go on doing it. It's not as if the money is very good - I get 40

gold sovereigns a year and a butt of malmsey, and my agent takes 10 per cent of that, which doesn't leave much.

At the moment I am working on a short poem about the phasing out of the Royal Yacht Britannia, welcoming the new royal yacht which the Government has announced, but now I have learnt that the Labour Party may refuse to build a new one if elected, which is going to make my poem look pretty stupid. My feeling now is that I should jack the job in, even if I have to buy myself out. What do you think I should do?

Chris Evans writes: Get stuffed. Next!

Dear Chris Evans, I wonder if you can help me?

My name is Peter Stringfellow, and I run the most successful club in the history of the world. Twenty years ago I was unknown. Now I run the most successful club in the history of the world. This proves several things, including that it is quite possible for a young fellow like me to come from nothing with a stupid name like Stringfellow and end up

running the most successful club in the world.

There are several perks to the job, including pulling lots of lovely birds, but one of the oddest perks is getting on TV - I mean, I am invited on to chat shows, and quiz shows such as 'Have I Got News for You?' and really quite classy stuff like that, where you are expected to make jokes and offer opinions, and stuff like that etc. The only thing is, I don't really have many opinions or make jokes, so I don't really have much to talk about. Except running the most successful club in the world, which is all I know about. So I refer to that a lot. But I am still puzzled as to why people ask me on radio or TV. What's your suggestion?

Chris Evans writes: Bigger off. Which is exactly what I'm going to do. If I had known that writing a column for a Monday paper meant working on Sunday morning, I'd never have taken this job. Never again!

The charismatic but unpredictable Chris Evans will be back again soon. Or not, as the case may be.

The crude words used to woo ignorant voters

Does political advertising work? Those who study the black arts of advertising offer convincing evidence that it does.

Last week we learned that Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party had their contract abruptly terminated by Mori following an attempt to engineer more palatable opinion polling results. Mori's Bob Worcester thought it unethical, and that was that. But the story highlighted the catastrophic results so far of the Referendum Party - 0.5 per cent in the polls, despite all that advertising.

Ah, you might say, the solid British voter is not for sale. Yuppies of England are not swayed by the mere flim-flam of advertising, unlike American voters, of whom Barrow and Forbes bought large numbers. You would, alas, be wrong.

However, at first glance advertising sales in the six months to December might suggest, deceptively, that voters have not been swayed. The Referendum Party spent £2.2m on posters and press space, gaining only 0.5 per cent support. The Tories spent £0.5m, availing them might but a paltry 3.2 per cent. Labour has spent £1.1m, half-way between the other two, and they sit on a very comfortable 50 per cent. The LibDems have spent nothing - well, £1,601 - yet they have 13 per cent, which is 26 times more than Sir James.

Does that prove that advertising is a waste of money? None of us likes to feel that political advertising sways us, because it is so dumb. These days the rest of advertising is sophisticated, self-mocking, teasing; it breathes wit, irony and sassiness. Set side by side with it on billboards, political advertising looks crass.

But then, it is expected to work only on a very small number of people. Eighty per cent know how they will vote - not just at this, but at the next election. "It's aimed at those who are not in the least interested in politics and who it would go away," says Bob Worcester, because those who switch off all television politics cannot escape posters. "If just 0.5 per cent of voters at the last election had swung to the second party in their constituency, we would have had a hung parliament." This is something that terrified Tory MPs, facing eviction from marginal seats, are well aware of: just a few don't-know-don't-care floaters can tip the balance.

In 1992 there was a small swing to the Tories at the last moment. How much difference did advertising make? The Tories spent more in that week than all of Procter and Gamble and Unilever put together. The sheer weight of the Double Whammy had its effect.

Poster-selling has become extraordinarily sophisticated. The big companies offer their sites in highly refined packages: Maiden Outdoor, which sells to all the parties, can offer a "family pack" of sites aimed at housewives and children near schools, toy shops and supermarkets. There is a "captains of industry" pack, targeted at major commuter routes, while their "leisure pack" sells sites aimed at the young - near clubs, cinemas, pubs and other youth venues.

Posters work if they reinforce what people already partly think. That is why Double Whammy swung votes while Demon Eyes did



Polly Toynbee

None of us likes to admit that political posters swing votes; they are crass compared with the wit, irony and self-mockery of other advertising

not. Currently, 3,001 Tory posters nationwide read "New Labour New Taxes/New Job Losses" etc, featuring the blood-red tear. That, Worcester says, is the right pitch, a negative campaign against the front-runners.

Labour currently has 1,500 posters with an almost identically mendacious message: "Next Tory Tax? £10.50 a week VAT on Food. Enough is Enough." But Worcester says Labour has all but won the election so they have nothing to gain from negative campaigning. They should be offering a message of hope, a lifting of the spirits, aspirational and inspirational.

But what of Sir James's £20m? Is he spending his money in vain? No, because he has already achieved precisely what he always wanted. He has frightened the Tory party into turning xenophobically anti-European and he has tilted public opinion alarmingly. A short time ago the likes of Douglas Hurd were saying, loftily, that referendums are not the British way, but both Labour and Conservatives have eaten their words since then. Both sound distinctly more anti-European than they did a year ago. A poll for the European movement last month showed that one-third of voters now want out of Europe altogether. Like it or not, we have been bought.

Tory Euro-sceptics were able to push the leadership only because the colour of Goldsmith's money scared the life out of a party already on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Goldsmith's money has purchased Major's and Rifkind's new line that it is "very unlikely" that Britain will join the single currency. Labour, too, has been towed some way along in the Goldsmith wake.

Where, now, is the advertising campaign on the other side? British industrialists with a vital interest in a positive European policy still seem to think that it is enough to make occasional speeches to the CBI and talk to ministers behind the scenes. But politicians in this fevered atmosphere will not be moved by mere British interests: they will be moved only by electoral interests. In what looks dangerously like a national stampede for the European Exit, the only way to change the politicians' minds is to persuade the people.

The captains of industry would be the best persuaders: even the third of voters who say they want to leave Europe say they wouldn't if they were persuaded that it would be against our economic interest. They are also the most ignorant, the very ones best reached by posters: the more people know about the EU, the more European they are. So now is the time for business to put money up front, fast, for a serious public campaign in support of closer ties with Europe - now, before the election. It would pull the Tories back from the brink of Euro-phobia and shift the whole tone of the debate.

The European Movement is about to start advertising, but it has a puny budget of £0.5m, 40 times less than Sir James's. So, where is your money, Bob Ayling of British Airways, Sir Ian Vallance of British Telecom, Dick Giordano of British Gas, Richard Branson of Virgin? (Answers on a poster, please.)

Andrew Whitman Smith's column will return next Monday.

You never know who you'll meet on a safari

by Rory Bremner

A Sunday spent by the river. Nothing special, you may think, except that this one has crocodiles and hippos which keep me awake at night in my tent, five yards from the water's edge.

No ordinary river, no ordinary tent, either, but one at Galdessa Camp in Kenya's Tsavo East National Park. Galdessa is one of a growing number of private camps and lodges whose development plays a leading role in the trend to combine conservation with tourism while benefiting local communities: eco-tourism. When I meet Galdessa's impossibly good-looking owner, Pierre Morgue D'Algue, and examine his list of monied and celebrity visitors, the phrase eco-tourism comes temptingly to mind, but let that pass.

Seventy per cent of Kenya's wildlife lives outside its national parks, so it makes ecological sense to encourage tourists away from the beaten track towards smaller, more remote lodges whose owners - including several former hunters - have eagerly seized on the possibilities of eco-tourism. Galdessa may be a luxurious safari camp, but its development, together with funding from the conservation charity Tusk, has led to the acquisition of 30 black rhinos in Tsavo. Richard Bonham, at Ol Donyo Was in the Chyulu Hills, and Ian Craig at Lewa Downs, are already supporting local communities through tourist revenue and environmental programmes. Without Bonham the Mtsai community would have no water supply; he brings it in from 30km away each day. And without the Craigs, there would be no rhino sanctuary at Lewa Downs.

My safari began where last year's ended: in Cape Town, with a sober and humiliating reminder of England's own endangered species - our cricketers. Watching South Africa roll over India at Newlands, we are greeted with the testine announcement that in reply to Zimbabwe's 249-7, England are 27-3. The crowd explodes with derisive laughter, the sort of bawling that would cause a Jeffrey Archer or a Michael Winner to shuffle in embarrassment. Is there no escape from this shame? It took a good few minutes before my friend Tim Wright had the presence of mind to point out that South Africa's success is due in no small measure to their English coach.

The arrival of Graham Cowdrey (son of Colin) brightened things considerably as Messrs Bremner and Wright immediately set about improving matters with a major bout of fielding practice on the hotel lawns. The acquisition of Marcus Berkman's brilliant book on cricket, *Rain Men*, and the resulting obsession with cricket commentators meant that within minutes we were struck with TMS-itis, where the victims develop an inability to speak except as Trevor Bailey. Thus: "erm ...



After 12 hours 15 minutes the spotter whispered 'cheetah'. We set off in pursuit. After 12 hours 16 minutes we were stuck in the mud

rather a good ball ...", "not a bad piece of parking ...", "one of the warmer mornings ...".

Later that evening Graham introduced me to Lester Piggett and quickly retreated, in the style of a child ringing a doorbell and running round the corner to await the reaction. He wasn't disappointed.

Lester, a legendary mumbler, was on great form. He completely unintelligible, having perfected a form of speech which eliminates vowels altogether, possibly for tax reasons. As he is also rather deaf, he was unable to hear most of what I could say between giggles, and the conversation fell at the first fence. The evening ended with much excitement with the news that Frankie Dettori, due to ride the next day's favourite, had a boil on his bum and couldn't take part. Word got round: Lester was keen. The racing fraternity, including Julian "scoop" Wilson, waited with bated breath to see if the great champion would

get a ride. Alas, it was not to be. And so up to Nairobi, several hours north and beyond the reach of mobile phones. Coverage in South Africa is incredibly good. Too good, in fact. In parts of the Kruger Park your mobile phone can get a signal, which has already led to some Germans excitedly ringing up friends in Frankfurt to say: "Guess what I'm looking at now? It starts with 'L' and ends with 'ion'." Good grief. This brings out the Victor Meldrew in me. It's only a matter of time before Bob Hoskins will appear on safari, in the bush, brandishing the all-new digital mobile phone and telling us, "It's good to stalk".

A bush doctor writes: "Don't throw away any cattle prods or devices for administering electrical shocks you may have left over from the Good Old Days." They've now been found to be uniquely effective for treating snake bites and bee stings. A quick few thousand volts through you apparently breaks down the protein which is the venom's key ingredient, allowing the victim a rapid recovery.

It's fair to say that at some time on your safari you will be completely terrified. You came here to get away from it all. The sound of lions hunting near your tent, or elephants, rhinos or, worst of all, hippos charging at you can rather make you wish you were back where there the only thing breathing down your neck is a deadline or a director. After about 12 hours searching for big cats in the Serengeti ("I'm sure they were here two weeks ago," said my guide, rather as if he'd misplaced his glasses), we realised that as we ate under a tree 30 miles from

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Sold: a pyramid of greed and folly

Albanians are not the first to be fooled by the lure of easy money. So why did they fall for it?

For the sharks and schemers who inhabit the world of pyramid-selling, Albania was the softest touch of all.

The 40 years of darkness under the Stalinist leader Enver Hoxha gave the Albanian people little opportunity for learning the subtleties and potential pitfalls of personal finance.

The election of the country's first non-Communist leader less than five years ago has failed to produce the anticipated influx of wealth for the citizens of Europe's poorest nation, and average wages remain at a miserable £45 a month.

With the lifting of the Stalinist curtain, Albanians have been exposed to televised sights of material wealth, but given no explanation as to how it is attained. So when the pyramid-seller arrived, with promises of untold riches, he was telling a desperate people what they wanted to hear: the secret formula for earning easy money. It was a message that has also been enthusiastically received in Britain and most other parts of the world. For, if the pitch is good, pyramid-selling can be a persuasive proposition.

Subscribers are asked to pay an entry fee - £3,000 is typical in the UK - and are promised unrealistic rates of return, with the money being paid from the subscriptions of new people recruited to the venture. The rules are fairly straightforward: each new member is typically required to recruit a further six people. But for the first member to get a good return from the scheme, they will need the three levels of the pyramid beneath them to be filled. This requires the recruitment of 216 people (6 x 6 x 6).

While this may not be beyond an enthusiastic pyramid salesman, the mathematics are more daunting for those who are subsequently

recruited to the scheme. For the six people on the second rung to fill the necessary three levels beneath them, each must find a further 216 people - a total of 1,296. When those 1,296 come to recruit, they will require 279,936 people. For these to get their reward, 60 million participants are required.

The problem with pyramid-selling is that the number of potential recruits is limited, meaning that those on the bottom levels have no chance of making money. Inevitably, the scheme collapses under its own weight long before the 60 million are recruited, and while those at the top of the pyramid will no doubt have made considerable gains, the vast majority of subscribers lose their money. When a scheme collapses, those who set it up, who may well have made large profits, are tempted simply to start all over again.

The activities of pyramid-salesmen in Britain have alarmed the Department of Trade and Industry, which has closed some of the larger schemes on the grounds that they are against the public interest. Alchemy UK, one of the most controversial, was wound up after taking £3m of investors' money. Participants were promised a return of £31,775 each after making 24 monthly payments of £75.

Another company, FFW, offered the Midas plan - computer-generated - and claimed to turn £140 into £600 as many times as investors liked. Some 20,000 people bought into the dream, eventually losing a total of £6m.



Ian Burrell

became law. Previous legislation, passed in the Seventies, had proved ineffective against operators which had no product to sell. Instead, regulators used provisions in the Companies Act to ask the High Court to shut down pyramids, a slow process which has been used to close 18 operations in the past three years.

The Government believes that the new legislation will finally end the practice in this country. John Taylor, the consumer affairs minister, said that many pyramid operations were "no more than swindles". For their part, pyramid sellers claim they are misunderstood. One of Titan Business Club's directors complained that the company had been the victim of "extreme prejudice" by the authorities.

The degree of suspicion is not dissimilar to that once levelled at time-share holiday schemes. Like many time-share operations, pyramid sales companies often draw potential new mem-

bers to hear their carefully prepared promotional patter in a highly charged atmosphere with ranks of other would-be members. And like time-share, direct selling - as pyramid-selling is also known - has its respectable side, with reputable companies serving satisfied customers. Most of these involve sales of products such as jewellery or cosmetics, and are not limited to the simple transfer of money. Richard Berry, of the Direct Selling Association, which represents legitimate multi-level marketing companies, has publicly welcomed the clamp-down on "get-rich-quick" schemes by the British authorities.

Pyramid-selling is not new. In the Twenties, Charles Ponzi gave America the name "Ponzi Scheme" after persuading gullible Americans to part with millions of dollars. And if a scam was tried and tested in America and Britain, then it was sure to succeed in the former Communist countries, where investors were even more vulnerable to being swindled.

In Russia, 25,000 angry investors recently converged on the offices of one pyramid-seller, and in Romania the Caritas scheme collapsed having attracted an estimated \$1bn (£630m) from up to 4 million Romanians. In each case, greed was the motivating factor, just as it will be for those who buy into future pyramid-selling schemes. People will always want to believe in the dream of fast and easy money.

Those with the most unshakable belief in the dream are often those in the most desperate circumstances, and this weekend in Albania, many investors still refused to believe that they had been duped. They rioted and burned, their anger ostensibly aimed at a government whom they accuse of malpractice over the affair; but in reality they have no one to blame but themselves.

No 2
Nineteen
Eighty-Four.

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obituaries / gazette

Crown Prince Asfa Wossen Haile Sellassie

The death of Asfa Wossen, Crown Prince of Ethiopia since 1930, almost certainly marks the final demise of thousands of years of Ethiopian monarchic tradition.

He was born in 1916 in the ancient Adare walled city of Harar, for centuries an important Islamic centre of learning and trade in the Horn of Africa. Thirty years previously, in 1887, Harar had been captured and incorporated into the expanding (and traditionally Christian) Ethiopian Empire by Emperor Menelik II, King of the Kings. Menelik had appointed Asfa Wossen's grandfather, Makonnen, to be his first "Abyssinian" Governor, and in due course Makonnen's son Tafari (Asfa Wossen's father, later the Emperor Haile Sellassie) succeeded to the Harar governorate.

It was an unsettled period throughout Ethiopia. With the decline of the historic power centres in Northern Ethiopia and Tigrai and the growing role of influential Muslims, Menelik's grandson and heir, Eyasu (who ruled uncrowned from 1913) spent a lot of time in the conquered provinces. In 1916 Tafari, then governor of Harar, was recalled to Addis Ababa, where he played a prominent role in a coup d'état against Eyasu being prepared by the traditional Orthodox Christian leaders and the Shewan nobility, with clear foreign support.

Tafari had his wife, Menon (grand-daughter of the Negus - king - Mikael of Wello, Eyasu's father) and son smuggled out of Harar. The young Asfa Wossen was left, in a traditional cradle attended by two servants, at the British Legation in Addis Ababa, to the supposed embarrassment of the Minister, the Hon Wilfred Gilbert Thesiger (father of the explorer). On 27 September 1916, at a meeting of notables and Orthodox clerics in Addis Ababa, Ahuna (bishop) Matheos announced the deposition and excommunication of Eyasu, accusing him of apostasy, by way of submission to Islam, and treason.

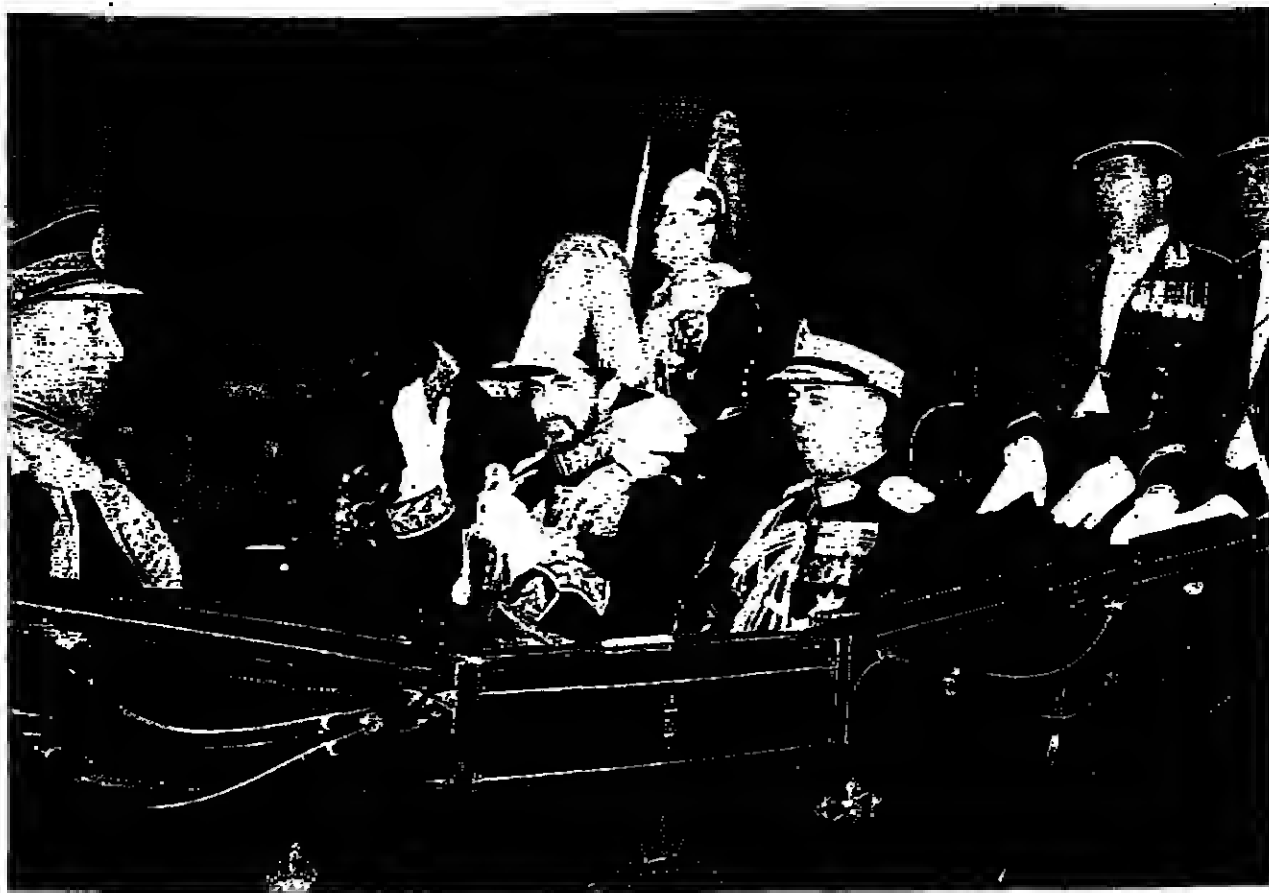
Eyasu's angered father, the Negus Mikael, at once took the field against the Shewan conspirators but surprisingly was defeated. On 11 February 1917, Zaudito, a barren daughter of Menelik, was crowned Queen of the Kings; a Ras (leading nobleman) was made Negus and the youthful, modern Tafari became Regent with the title of Ras.

It was still some years before Asfa Wossen's position was further secured. His father was created Negus in 1928 and, finally, on 2 November 1930, crowned King of the Kings Haile Sellassie (Power of the Trinity). Asfa Wossen was himself given a Shewan royal title, Merid Azmach. In conversation most people began to refer to his new status by the popular term *Aligash*. He grew up fast in the strict court, fashioned after that of Sweden by the reformist Emperor with the help of an adviser from that neutral country.

Asfa Wossen was only 16 when he, in turn, was married to Walata Israel, great-granddaughter of the Tigrean Emperor Yohannes. Although, with others at the coronation, he had publicly pledged his loyalty to his stern autocratic father, and accompanied him on state duties whenever possible, Asfa Wossen was always closer to his mother. Over the years a seeming gulf developed between the prince and his father, who openly favoured his second son, Makonnen.

Asfa Wossen was appointed governor of Wello in the early 1930s, and after a major flare-up, in which his mother interceded, he began to spend more time in Dessie, Wello's capital city. The wily and suspicious emperor filled his son's household with informers.

In the early 1930s Mussolini sought to create a situation by which he might invade Ethiopia without incurring military reaction from members of the League of Nations, particularly Britain and France. Ethiopia's feudal and ethnic divisions were exploited by Italy, but Asfa Wossen and his father



Reluctant but dignified: Asfa Wossen (right) with his father the Emperor Haile Selassie, on a visit to London, 1954. Photograph: Hulton Getty

— unlike several other nobles — resolutely refused all offers to their own advantage, endeavouring to safeguard the last outpost of African independence.

When in 1935 all else failed and the Emperor's mobilisation order arrived, Asfa Wossen and his mentor Dejazmach Wodajo Ali found it difficult to raise troops, for the local people were bribed and many retained some allegiance to the Negus Mikael and Eyasu, unaware of the latter's mysterious death that year at his prison near Harar. Eventually, Asfa Wossen had to slip out of Dessie to the capital via Warra Hailu, after being warned of imminent treachery.

The under-equipped Ethiopian armies were repeatedly defeated and on 2 May 1936, the Imperial Ethiopian family fled by train to the coast and on to

Jerusalem and Bath in England, but not before Asfa Wossen had witnessed the horrors of modern warfare. The Italian forces had used mustard gas, which burnt the soldiers' often bare feet and their lungs. Even Red Cross field hospitals which the prince visited were bombed by Capronis which enjoyed undisputed control of the skies.

In exile, Asfa Wossen amicably divorced his wife, who had been unable to give him a son, and married Medfariashworq Abebe. For years he kept in secret touch with several patriots who fought on in the Ethiopian mountains and meantime studied at Liverpool University and, once Italy declared war on Britain, at the Royal Military Academy in the Sudan. There he lived at the "Pink Palace" on the Nile north

of Khartoum, but was with his father and younger brother when, on 20 January 1941, their small force crossed the Dinder River into Ethiopia.

British Commonwealth forces had already invaded Eritrea and Somalia and were converging on Addis Ababa. Asfa Wossen accompanied his father, Orde Wingate, Brigadier Sandford and others into Gogjam. After his liberation, he travelled north to co-ordinate the patriot forces in the last phase of the liberation struggle at Gondar. Having been promoted Major-General by his father, he resumed his governorate in Dessie, Wello, *Leul* (prince) Makonnen was increasingly favoured in the capital until, in 1957, he is said to have been accidentally killed in a car crash. Most Ethiopians believe there was a cover-up, for

he had acquired a reputation as a philanthropist.

Attention reverted to the first son, though his relations with his father did not improve. He was reticent, but always dignified, and was kept short of funds by the Emperor that his mother, a rich land-owner, was constrained to make him a secret allowance.

As the winds of change swept over Africa in the 1950s, Asfa Wossen's name was linked, most probably without his knowledge, to a number of conspiracies. Then, on the evening of 13 December 1960, he was escorted to the Headquarters of the Imperial Guard by his commander, Brigadier General Mengistu Neway. He, with his brother Girmame and the heads of the Police and Intelligence, conspired peacefully

to change Ethiopia into a modern constitutional monarchy. The Emperor was away on a series of state visits and that night many, but not all, of the empire's powerful officials and ministers were rounded up on the pretext that the Emperor was ill. The Crown Prince broadcast more than once in support of peaceful change and the myth has developed that he had a pistol at his back and also later that a loyal officer shielded him from machine-gun bullets. In fact, although he had no prior knowledge of the coup attempt, there was no coercion and his speeches were tape-recorded in an office and taken to Radio Addis Ababa.

He left the Palace during the confusion and fighting and was of course at the airport to welcome the Emperor on his return, inspiring much press speculation — the headline, "The Once and Future King", was fairly typical — but Haile Sellassie made no public display of his anger. Privately, he was sad and often furious. "We forgive you and forget you," he is said to have told Asfa Wossen, and although he thought it prudent to excuse the prince from participation in the show trial of the surviving conspirators — several had taken on their own lives — the Emperor spent many evenings listening to secret tapes of the trial grasping for hints of what had really happened.

In later years, Asfa Wossen's mother and younger brother Leul Sahle died. For several years he remained in the background, not invariably unpopular with the new generations, although they were becoming increasingly radical in their disaffection with the imperial regime.

Then, in 1973, he suffered a serious stroke, and paralysed down one side and, barely able to communicate, was flown to London. When the revolution eventually occurred the following year, some announced that Asfa Wossen would be their choice for constitutional monarch, but they were soon displaced by more radical

forces. Surviving royals were incarcerated and in subsequent struggles for power many atrocities occurred.

However, even the revolutionary regime (1974-91) which the most violent eventually established in Ethiopia, could not cope with the regional and ethnic pressures which had played so large a role in the rise to power of Tafari's family. Abroad the descendants of other prominent nobles began to adopt styles and titles and otherwise promote themselves until, in 1989, resentful and probably equally ambitious relatives prevailed on the ailing prince to hold a reception at the Ghibbi (palace) on a third floor in Portland Place, in London, to declare himself Emperor Amha Sellassie, his son Zara Yacob Crown Prince and his late father "Haile Sellassie the Great". It was a non-event and ill-advised. In 1990, the family moved to the United States.

In north-east Africa today, distantly related sons of important northern families and their followers have re-established independence in Eritrea, and in Ethiopia the influence of Tigrai has been greatly restored. The national President is an Oromo, but the absorption of Negus Mikael's people and particularly their cousins in the south-west and south, is by no means complete. There remain many questions to be answered about the Somali peoples on all sides of Ras Makonnen's borders. Had his son Haile Sellassie not chanced to power for so long and had his son Asfa Wossen's own health not failed him, the basic realities of Ethiopian politics would still have had to be addressed.

Richard Greenfield

Asfa Wossen, crown prince: born Harar, Ethiopia, 27 July 1916; Merid Azmach 1930; Governor General of Wello Province, Ethiopia; married 1932 Woizero Walata Israel (marriage dissolved; one daughter); Woizero Medfariashworq Abebe (one son, three daughters); died Fairfax, Virginia 17 January 1997.

Stanley Hyland

In the 1950s and 1960s, before the spin doctors took over, television party political and election broadcasts were solely produced by the BBC's Television Talks department. Prime ministers, warily facing the hazards of live transmission in the new medium, tended to demand the services of a familiar trusted producer. For Anthony Eden it was David Attenborough; for Harold Wilson it had to be Stanley Hyland. He produced most of Wilson's main broadcasts from 1964 to 1970. It was the Labour prime minister himself who applied to Hyland the nickname "Gold Microphone in Waiting".

Like Wilson, Hyland was a Yorkshireman. He grew up in Shipley and attended Bradford Grammar School with Denis Healey. At his 14th birthday party, Hyland's father, a lifelong Labour supporter, decided to instruct him in the facts of life. He drew Stanley aside, told him he had important information to impart, and began, "First let me tell you about the birth of the Trade Union movement."

After serving as a Navy signaller during the Second World War Hyland became a research librarian at the House of Commons. He acquired a thorough knowledge of both the workings of Parliament and the structure of the Palace of Westminster, which he put to good use in the first of three thrillers he wrote, *Who Goes Hang?* (1938), about an ancient corpse discovered in the clock tower of Big Ben.

Hyland joined the BBC European Service in 1951, and held three posts, including Turkish Programme Organiser. He



Hyland: "Gold Microphone in Waiting" Photograph: BBC

then moved to the Television Talks department. He worked under John Grist, then in charge of producing all the political programmes, and together they developed *Who Goes Home?*, a predecessor of *Question Time*, in which two MPs from adjoining constituencies debated political issues before an audience of their electors. The first came from Newcastle with William Whitelaw and Fred Peart making their first television appearances. In 1959 *The Hastings* used the same technique to cover the General Election campaign, dividing the country into as many groups of constituencies as could be reached by regional and local transmitters at once. In September 1962 the Con-

servatives asked that Grist be assigned to them as the principal producer of their party election broadcasts. In February 1963 a similar request for Hyland came from the Labour Party. This began the close relationship between Wilson and Hyland, who also produced the programmes for the Liberals.

Meanwhile Hyland had been involved in a quite different series of service programmes, using Barry Bucknell, an all-purpose handyman, to give practical instruction from the studio to the growing body of DIY enthusiasts. Bucknell and Hyland then suggested an ingenious development: buy a dilapidated but structurally sound house. Then show Bucknell

each week doing the various jobs needed to reconstruct it, and finally sell it again at a profit.

They discovered a suitable house in a Victorian terrace in Ealing, west London, with space alongside to park an Outside Broadcasts van, and the BBC's regular and very respectable estate agents were asked to negotiate the purchase. Their surveyor's horrified report advised the television service "not to touch it with a bargepole". Hyland courteously replied that the things the surveyor had found wrong were virtues for his programme, which was a popular success.

In 1970 Hyland, by then Chief Assistant in the Current Affairs Group, decided to retire from the BBC and put his production skills to work commercially. He founded HyVision, one of the first private companies to train amateur performers to face a television camera. His clients included ICI, the police, Imperial Tobacco, Commercial Union Assurance, and the Save the Children Fund. "When one of my clients is on," Hyland claimed, "I promise you Robin Day won't chew him up."

In 1994 Hyland was involved in an accident which resulted in the death of his wife and severe injuries for himself; this clouded his final years, though recently he managed to pay a last visit to the House of Commons, where his career had begun.

Leonard Miall

Henry Stanley Hyland, television producer and author: born Shipley, Yorkshire 26 January 1914; BBC Television Talks 1953-70; married Morna Hopkinson (died 1994; two sons); died Bromley, Kent 17 January 1997.

Ian Munro was a medical journalist, doctor, campaigner, humanitarian, Yorkshireman, editor and cricketer, probably in that order. He trained at Guy's, remaining a Guy's man at heart; but it was a heart that also found space for many humanitarian causes, and for the Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

Munro had the Yorkshire qualities of sturdy independence combined with an instinctive questioning of authority. He was a true radical and a good sceptic. He disliked the self-interest of the medical establishment and was often a thorn in their flesh.

He was recruited by *The Lancet* in 1951 after serving in the army as a radiologist. Dr Robbie (Theodore) Fox, the editor, felt *The Lancet* needed Munro's radiological expertise, but it was as a writer and campaigner that he excelled. He spent the next 36 years there, striding around the office, large-framed, loose-limbed and dishevelled, emitting a curiously pitched hum when engrossed, often irritable with people who moved less quickly than he did. When he thought he was unobserved he could be seen practising cricket strokes.

The Lancet received over 4,000 papers a year from around the world, and only one in eight made it into print. The unsuccessful authors would receive an exegesis thanking them for their flawed masterpiece and regretting that he must refuse it; nothing was ever "rejected". Sometimes his refusals were so gentle that the recipient would have to phone for clarification. Robbie Fox claimed to have appointed Munro on the strength of a letter

he had written to thank him for lunch: "whoever can write a really good letter must be able to recognise a bad one and therefore has the makings of an editor."

Munro was a thunderer with his pen and wrote many of *The Lancet's* unsigned editorials. When the Health Service was strike-bound in 1983 he blasted forth at Norman Fowler, then Secretary of State for Social Services.

Mr Fowler might reflect again on the quality of conscience that his post requires of its occupant. How far can he permit the NHS to be devalued by the intractability of the prime minister he serves? If he has deep doubts, as *The Lancet* believes he should have, about the outcome of his term as Secretary of State, then he must resign.

The NHS was Munro's greatest passion, but not the only one. His other causes included world population and family planning, abortion law reform, nuclear disarmament, and the introduction of simple and effective health care measures for the Third World. He incurred the displeasure of the family planning lobby, though the cause was dear to his heart, by publishing preliminary and alarming papers on the dangers of the contraceptive pill; he did this because he felt that frightening information should not be suppressed and that women should be equipped to make informed choices. He was influenced by the work of Iain Chalmers and colleagues at Oxford, showing that increased interference in childbirth is no guarantee of increased safety. He was an early and consistent champion of Wendy Savage, the mildly radical gynaecologist who was accused of incompe-

tence by some of her colleagues and abruptly suspended.

He was the archetypal doctor, listening with concentrated patience, and was accessible to his colleagues in Fleet Street even in unsocial hours.

Munro was, typically, on the reformist wing of the Yorkshire County Cricket Club. He played for Weald Cricket Club and for the Silhouettes, a group of Guy's graduates whose silhouettes probably grew ever less svelte with age. He also led the *Lancet* team on their matches — usually rounders or croquet — against a scratch side from the *British Medical Journal*. As a sportsman his personality changed to one of ruthlessness and he would argue ferociously about the rules with the captain of the rival team while the other players were more interested in beer and an agreeable day out — the scores were usually tampered with to produce a draw. When he joined *The Lancet* it was locked in combat with the British Medical Association and its *Journal*, partly because *The Lancet* was strongly for the NHS and the BMA

against it. By the time Munro retired this hostility had turned to amicable rivalry and it was his counterpart at the *BMJ*, Stephen Lock, who organised a farewell dinner for him and the publication by the Keynes Press of a book of tributes called *Swerving neither to the right nor the left* (1988), an appropriate title: his liberalism and radicalism was determined by his beliefs in individual freedom and human rights. Munro would attack politicians regardless of their affiliation and wore their disapproval like a medal.

Behind the conviviality was a shy and intensely private man. Married to a doctor, he had five children, and one of his daughters is a midwife. Though not a Quaker — and not a teetotaler either — Munro's radical and humanitarian ideals fitted well with *The Lancet's* Quaker traditions.

His retirement in 1988 freed him to give his energies to causes dear to him: the Association for the Promotion of Health Care in the Former Soviet Union (Chairman 1988-93), Medical Action for Global Security (Vice-Chairman from 1988); and the UK branch of Physicians for Human Rights (President from 1991). He died of complications following an operation and he was, of course, an NHS patient.

Caroline Richmond

Ian Arthur Hoyle Munro, medical journalist, born Bradford 5 November 1923; Deputy Editor, The Lancet 1965-76, Editor 1976-88; married 1948 Olive Jackson (three sons, two daughters); died Tunbridge Wells, Kent 22 January 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

CRICHTON: David George, on 22 January, peacefully, at Headbourne Worthy, aged 82. Deeply loved husband of Betty and the late Susie (for 50 years). Loving father of Pamela and Charles and grandfather. Cremation private. Thanking service at St Mary's, Bournemouth, on Thursday 13 February at 12 noon. Family flowers only, donations to Trinity Hospice, London SW4 0RN.

MAAS: Jeremy Stephen, on 23 January 1997, aged 68. Husband of Antonia, father of Abigail, Rupert and Jonathan. Private family funeral. Memorial service to be announced. Donations in lieu of flowers, if desired, to the Royal Academy, Burlington House, London W1.

TAYLOR: Don Arthur Augustine OSB, priest and monk of Buckfast Abbey, peacefully, on 23 January 1997, in his 80th year. Requiem Mass in the Abbey Church, Saturday 1 February at 10.30am.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, telephone 0171-293 2011. Charges are £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Birthdays

Mr Mohamed Al Fayed, chairman of Harrods Holdings, 64; Professor Gillian Beer, President of Clare Hall, Cambridge, 62; Mr Nicholas Bonford, Head Master, Harrow, 58; Sir Wilfrid Bourne QC, former Permanent Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Office, 75; Dr Robert Burchfield, former editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* Supplement, 73; Mr John Bury, theatre, opera and film designer, 72; Mr Michael Collins, clarinetist, 35; Sir Kenneth Corfield, former chairman, STC, 73; Mrs Maureen Corrigan-Maguire, joint winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, 53; Mr Michael Craig, actor and playwright, 68; Baroness Cumberlege, Under-Secretary, Department of Health, 54; Lord Dunboyne, former circuit judge, 80; Sir John Eccles, physiologist, 94; Air Commodore the Hon Timothy Elworthy, Captain of the Queen's Flight, 59; The Right Rev Henry Halsey, former Bishop of Carlisle, 78; Brigadier Rita Hennessey, former matron-in-chief, QARANC, 64; Mr John Hopkins, playwright, 66; Senator Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Director-General, Unesco, 63; Mr Alan Milburn MP, 39; Miss Nina Milkina, concert pianist, 78; Baroness Rawlings, former MER 58; Mr Mordcaai Richter, novelist and play-

wright, 66; Lord Ris, actor and former secretary-general of Menzies, 73; Sir Roger Sims MP, 67; Mr Neville Trautman MP, 65; Sir William van Straubenzee, former MP, 73; Lord Vinson, inventor, and Chairman, Institute of Economic Affairs, 66.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, composer, 1756; Eugene-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, architect, 1814; Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), author, 1832; Kaiser Wilhelm II, Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia, 1859; Jerome David Kern, composer, 1885; Deshaire Abraham Bloemaert, painter and engraver, 1651; Willem van Mieris, painter, 1747; Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco Verdi, composer, 1813; Dame Gwen Frangon-Davies, actress, 1992. On this day: the University of Georgia, United States, was founded, 1785; the independence of Greece was proclaimed, 1822; a patent for the electric lamp was taken out by Thomas A. Edison, 1879; television was first demonstrated publicly by John Logie Baird, 1926; civilian women were conscripted in Germany, 1943; three US astronauts lost their lives during tests in the Apollo capsule at Cape Kennedy, 1967; flooding in Southern California resulted in many deaths,

1969; a cease-fire began in Vietnam, 1973. Today is the Feast Day of St. Angela Merici, St. Julian of Le Mans, St. Marior or May and St. Vitalian, pope.

Lectures

Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Professor Ian Stewart, "Four Centuries of Logarithms", 1pm. University College London, London WC1: Mr Andrew Lewis, "Roman Law in the Middle of the Third Millennium", 5.30pm.

Professor P.H. Fowler FRS

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of Peter Fowler, Fellow of the Royal Society and Professor Emeritus of the University of Bristol, who died on 8 November 1996, will be held in Bristol Cathedral on Friday 18 April at 11am.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards.

The following notes of judgments were prepared by the reporters of the *All England Law Reports*.

Children

Devon CC v B, CA (Sir Stephen Brown P, Pill LJ, Sir Patrick Russell) 11 Dec 1996.

A local authority, having the care of a child under s 31 of the Children Act 1989, applied to the county court for an injunction to restrain the child's mother from visiting the town where the child was to be placed for adoption. Apart from the question whether the terms of the injunction itself were too wide, the injunction had been made in support of an order to place the child pursuant to a care order. In seeking to invoke the jurisdiction of the court's inherent jurisdiction, the leave of the High Court was required under s 100(3) of the 1989 Act. No such leave had been obtained nor had s 100(3) been brought to the attention of the judge. The county court had no in-

herent jurisdiction to grant an injunction, its jurisdiction being derived from statute alone. The injunction would be set aside and the appeal allowed.

George Meredith (solitor: Devon CC) for the local authority; *Richard Hickmet (Wolfebars, Plymouth)* for the mother; *Lawrence Deegan (Stanton & Walker, Chesham)* for the father; *Michael Melville-Stevens (Messrs Gill Alastair, Plymouth)* for the guardian ad litem.

Land

Thames Hellport plc v Tower Hamlets LBC, CA (Beldam, Ward, Schiemann LJ) 28 Nov 1996.

Because the environmental impact was quite different from that created by inland navigation use, the employment of floating platforms at various points on the Thames between Chelsea and Greenwich for the launching and landing of helicopters could amount to a material change of use of "land"

CASE SUMMARIES

27 January 1997

(the river and banks) and hence "development" for the purposes of statutory planning control. The court could not declare in advance whether limiting such use to not more than 28 days a year at any one location would cause it to be permitted (without prior application) under the General Development Order 1995 as on each occasion it would be up to the relevant enforcing authority to determine what area had been affected.

Michael Fitzgerald QC, Robert Fookes (Pere Cholemei Béchoff) for the applicants; *David Wildcliffe QC, Michael Druce (Simmons & Simmons)* for the respondents.

Titterton v Tunbridge Wells BC, CA (Sir Stephen Brown P, Pill LJ, Sir Patrick Russell) 4 Dec 1996. The applicant sought compensation in respect of land adjoining his house which had been allocated to the green belt

and which he claimed had therefore been blighted. The decision of the Lands Tribunal, hearing a preliminary point of law, that land allocated to the Green Belt was not blighted land within the meaning of s 149(1) and Sched 13 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 was upheld on appeal. The applicant in person; *David Lanning (F&H Harris, solicitor to the council)* appeared for the respondent.

Negligence

National Home Loans Corp plc v Giffen Couch & Archer (a firm); QBD (G Hamilton QC, Dip J) 6 Dec 1996. A solicitor instructed by both a mortgagee and a mortgagor on a remortgage was under a duty to inform the lender if he discovered the proposed buyer had a bad record of repayment with a previous lender, and his failure to do so could render him liable in negligence.

Daniel Seara QC, Peter Kirby (Eversheds, Cardiff) for the plaintiff; *Nicholas Davidson QC, Elizabeth Weaver (Mills & Reeve, Cambridge)* for the defendant.

business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2096
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Promising Aids trials provide a shot in the arm for Glaxo

Magnus Grimond

Promising Aids trial results over the weekend gave a fillip to Glaxo Wellcome's portfolio of new and existing HIV drugs. The company said it was "encouraged by these initial reports" even if it was too early to draw firm conclusions from a relatively small trial.

According to Glaxo, a majority of patients suffering from human immunodeficiency virus, the precursor to full-blown Aids, saw levels of the virus drop to undetectable levels following four weeks of treatment with two new compounds under de-

velopment by the drugs giant. There was also no sign of any resistance to the combined treatment, a problem which has dogged some other anti-Aids drugs.

The news, released at a Washington medical conference yesterday, came alongside encouraging results from trials involving a "triple cocktail" of drugs using Glaxo's existing Retrovir (AZT) and Efavir (3TC) anti-Aids products in association with drugs developed by Abbott Laboratories and Merck, two US rivals to Glaxo.

Those tests offered hope for

children who had inherited the HIV virus from their parents, seeming to suggest a cocktail of the drugs administered early could stop HIV in its tracks. Again, researchers stressed that it was too early to know for certain whether the drugs were completely effective.

Separately, DuPont Merck, a joint venture between the Delaware-based chemicals company and Merck, said an experimental drug known as DMP-266 in conjunction with another Merck treatment, Crixivan, had shown a fall in HIV blood counts below detectable levels in 82 per cent of patients.

The results of the new Glaxo drug trials, which were carried out by the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, were greeted with cautious optimism by the company. Richard Kent, director of worldwide clinical research, said: "While it would be extremely premature to draw any conclusions based on such early results in such a small number of patients, we are encouraged by these initial reports."

Larger trials involving a variety of types of patient and different drug combinations were continuing, he added, "and we are working as quickly as possible to learn what their optimal role in therapy will be."

The new compounds involved are part of a new generation of anti-Aids drugs following on from Retrovir and Efavir. One, a so-called reverse transcriptase inhibitor co-

denamed 1592U89, was developed by Wellcome before its takeover by Glaxo as a successor to Efavir. The other is a protease inhibitor coded 141W94, which was invented by a US biotechnology company, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, and has been licensed to Glaxo.

The latest findings on the drugs' effectiveness in combi-

nation were released at the Fourth National Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Washington. Five out of seven patients in the trial showed positive results, with the amount of virus in their bloodstream dropping to below 400 detections per millilitre, while infection-fighting CD4 cells increased over the four-week period. The drugs were said to be "well tolerated", although nausea is clearly a problem, forcing one patient to discontinue the treatment.

Even so, analysts are expected to generally welcome the results as confirming the

value of combination therapy in the battle against Aids. Anthony Colletta of Glaxo's own brokers, Hoare Govett, said on Friday: "There are no fears about Glaxo's position in the HIV market... even on the most bearish forecast it will still have 50 per cent of the market by the year 2000."

By then he expects the group's anti-Aids portfolio to be generating sales of £1.15bn, out of the total of £5.6bn forecast to be coming from new drugs launched between 1993 and 2000. Within that, the 1592 compound will be turning over £112m, while 141W sales could

be £121m, he believes. The trials on children, conducted by the University of Massachusetts, are similar to a study by leading Aids researcher David Ho. In his study of newly-infected HIV adults, he found that a mixture of Abbott Laboratories' Norvir with Glaxo Wellcome's AZT and 3TC could reduce the level of HIV in patients' blood to below detectable levels.

It also appeared to stop the disease's reproduction in the lymphoid tissue and elsewhere in the body.

He found similar effects with a mix of Merck's Crixivan and 3TC and AZT.

Supermarkets on brink of new price war

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

A supermarket price war will break out this year, slashing profits at the big grocers, if Sainsbury falls in its attempt to regain market share by other means. According to Verdict, the retail analyst, the likelihood of a damaging fight for dominance of the saturated food retail sector is greater now than at any time since the early 1980s. Kwik Save and Iceland that do not enjoy the benefits of Sainsbury's and Tesco's economies of scale.

Only the largest chains are currently in a position to launch and win a price war. Although Verdict believes Sainsbury is the most likely initiator of a price war, Tesco is expected to launch a pre-emptive strike if it thinks Sainsbury is about to open fire.

The need for Sainsbury to act has been heightened by the establishment by Tesco of a 2.6 percentage points market share lead. Tesco is widely seen as having been more innovative in product development, marketing and store design. It has narrowed the gap with Sainsbury in both sales density and operating margin.

With 20 per cent more sales area than its main rival, Tesco is expected to consolidate its position in future and put big resources behind building its

brand reputation and widening its lead over Sainsbury.

Verdict's report says: "Tesco's supremacy goes way beyond marketing expertise. The huge strides it made in improving product quality, ranging and customer service means that Tesco is delivering the promises made by its marketing."

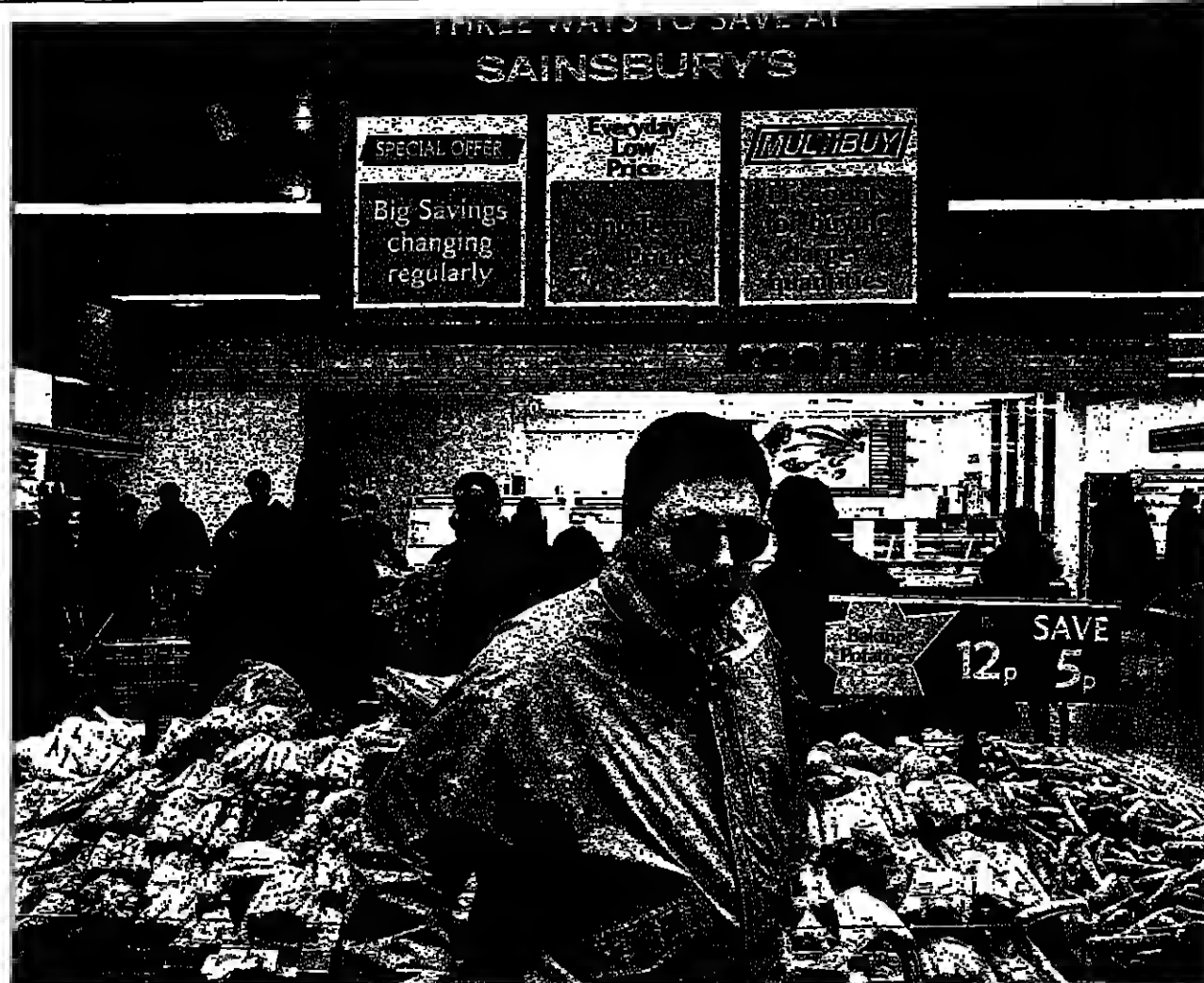
The battle between Tesco and Sainsbury will be one of the most significant events on the high street this year, with the grocery sector estimated to represent 38p of every pound spent in Britain's shops.

The sector has taken on a significance well beyond the size of the food market - total grocers' sales of £64bn are 25 per cent more than the total amount spent on food.

The renaissance of value for money as the driving force of the supermarkets' sales efforts marks a shift away from the use of loyalty cards that has dominated the past year.

The cards have proved expensive to run and the jury remains out on whether they can retain shoppers' loyalty in the absence of product innovation and good service.

Asda has already said it sees the cards, which were first launched by Tesco, as a distraction from its core retailing skills. The cost of Sainsbury's Reward scheme was put at £10m last week and although the cards provide the company



Taking sides: The battle between Sainsbury and Tesco will be one of the most significant events on the high street

with valuable information about its customers, they are not generating sufficient new revenue to cover their cost.

As well as facing a threat from the majors slashing prices, the plight of the traditional high street grocers has been exacerbated by a second squeeze from

hard discounters, led by Aldi, which has made a determined play for the lower end of the market. According to Verdict, it is seen as providing a better service to the poorest end of the market than Kwik Save and

could become even more of a force if a merger of Aldi, Netto and Lidl were effected. Another issue affecting many food retailers is management succession, with Asda, Safeway, Sainsbury and Tesco all seeing changes at the top.

Germany positive it will meet 3% deficit target

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The German government will publish a new report tomorrow sticking to its forecast that the economy will pick up this year. Its optimism contrasts with growing fears among economists that growth will be too sluggish for the government to keep its deficit low enough to qualify for the single currency.

The report will predict growth of 2.5 per cent this year, up from only 1.4 per cent last year. This will be enough, the government forecasts, for the gap between its revenues and spending to shrink to 2.9 per cent of GDP, just below the 3 per cent ceiling set in the Maastricht Treaty.

The tax reform package announced last week will, according to the forecast, boost growth by 0.5 per cent. Finance minister Theo Waigel said tax reform would boost competitiveness and job creation.

Yet the report is also due to admit that the unemployment rate will average 11 per cent for the year. Other forecasters are even more pessimistic, predict-

ing that the number of jobless is unlikely to decline from its record level of 4 million.

"This level of unemployment could have a very bad impact on government finances," said Michael Lewis, an economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

On Friday trade unions said they would not accept an invitation to talks with Chancellor Helmut Kohl to discuss unemployment. "We are not prepared to take part in whatever political sham lies behind these talks," said a spokesman for the IG Metall union.

Union leaders are angry about welfare cuts introduced in the drive to trim the deficit. It is this anger that leads many experts to see strong growth this year as essential for public acceptance of economic and monetary union as well as for the sake of the budget.

The government's confidence that growth will revive enough for it to satisfy the Maastricht requirements this year, the key year for the decision as to which countries will qualify for EMU, is backed by the European Commission.

Holidays 'worth £10bn by 2009'

Simon Calder



Charles Newbold: Greater demand from the retired

Britain's package holiday industry will double in size in the next 12 years, the market leader has predicted. Charles Newbold, managing director of Thomson, said at a weekend conference in Hertfordshire that sales across the industry would rise from around £5bn to £10bn by 2009.

The increased demand would come largely from "cash-rich, time-rich" retired travellers. Thomson traditionally has about 30 per cent of the inclusive tour market, but has lost market share on advance bookings for the forthcoming summer season, which accounts for four-fifths of its business. Fig-

ures for sales since brochures were launched last summer suggest that Airnours, Britain's second-largest operator, is narrowing the gap on Thomson. Airnours, which launched its programme ahead of Thomson, has gained a couple of points to 19 per cent, while Thomson has slipped back to 29 per cent.

Overall, about 9 million people are expected to take a package holiday from Britain this summer - the same as last year. After a disastrous summer in 1995, in which the top 30 tour operators collectively lost £10m, capacity has been reduced and prices increased.

Richard Bowden-Doyle, Thomson's deputy managing

director, said last-minute "Square Deal" holidays had declined from 30 per cent to below 10 per cent of Thomson's business, and called for the industry to reduce such offers still further: "Square Deals have no place in the market place. They must be killed stone dead."

Spain remains the most popular destination for British package holidaymakers. The Dominican Republic has seen an increase in visitor numbers of 50 per cent over the past year, and has overtaken Florida as the leading long-haul destination among Thomson customers.

The company believes, however, that most travellers will re-

main conservative in their choice of destination. Predicting holidaymakers' habits in 2009, Mr Bowden-Doyle said: "Never mind all this nonsense about Vietnam and Lebanon - they'll all go to Spain."

Yet evidence from a travel fair in London at the weekend suggests that tourists' horizons are expanding. When the Independent Traveller's World exhibition closed last night, the organisers said visitor numbers had increased by a quarter on the same event last year to 15,000. Helen Caldwell, exhibition director, said: "Our experience shows people are desperate for information on places other than Spain."

Cable & Wireless poised to give Mercury the boot

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Cable & Wireless has taken the first step towards formally ditching its best-known brand name in the UK with the removal of the "Mercury" brand name from its UK telephone subsidiary's London headquarters. The move is a prelude to incorporating Mercury in a land-

mark £5bn merger with three cable operators.

Workers at Mercury Communications' headquarters in central London arrived on Friday morning to discover that the huge corporate logo on the front of the building had been concealed behind white boards. Inside, perplexed employees were handed a brief letter from Peter Howell-Davies, Mercury's

chief executive, which said the move was a "first symbolic step in the process leading to the formation of Cable and Wireless Communications", the name for the new company.

The letter went on: "The white covers will be in place for approximately two weeks. We will then put up interim signage with the Cable and Wireless logo and name. When CWC is

formed and launched in April we will erect permanent signage depicting the full Cable and Wireless Communications name and logo."

Mercury was unable to explain why it felt the need to hide the Mercury name for two weeks, rather than simply leave the logo in place until a new sign had been constructed. However, the decision to dispen-

se with the Mercury brand confirms the drive by Dick Brown, C&W chief executive, towards "global branding", using the C&W identity in all its subsidiaries. The decision to abandon the Mercury brand, some 11 years after the business began marketing telephone services, emphasises the importance of branding in the success of the new group.

The motive for making a one-off tax an annual levy is, therefore, strong," he concludes.

Mr Fosh also claims that the impact of an ongoing tax on utilities has been underestimated by investors. "With strong balance sheets, utilities could relatively easily withstand a one-off tax, raising up to £5bn. By contrast, an ongoing tax, even if a lesser sum were raised each year, would reduce future revenues at a time when they are already threatened by limited growth prospects and tighter regulation."

But it is the introduction of full competition that will hit the utilities hardest. "The effects of competition may be sudden and dramatic," Mr Fosh warns. "In gas and electricity, for example, there could be a significant and damaging overnight drop in margins as the regulatory bands power to the market."

The regulatory outlook was clouded last week when Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, signalled he might be prepared to loosen price controls on power companies if they were hit by Labour's windfall tax. Labour has consistently denied the tax would have any effect on consumers' bills.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
	Index	Close	Week's chg	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	1996/97 High
FTSE 100	4218.80	+11.1	+0.3	4271.50	3632.30	3.69			
FTSE 250	4598.00	+14.6	+0.3	4616.00	4015.30	3.39			
FTSE 350	2093.40	+5.7	+0.3	2115.80	1818.60	3.63			
FTSE SmallCap	2282.42	+4.5	+0.2	2294.82	1954.06	2.95			
FTSE All Share	2066.62	+5.6	+0.3	2087.11	1791.95	3.58			
New York	6696.48	-136.6	-2.0	6883.90	5032.94	1.95			
Tokyo	17889.36	-400.7	-2.2	22666.80	17303.65	0.887			
Hong Kong	13379.55	-476.9	-3.4	13868.24	10204.87	3.097			
Frankfurt	2998.24	-3.1	-0.1	3033.46	2253.36	1.501			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
	Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (%)	Year Ago	Long Term (%)	Year Ago		
UK	8.06	6.69	7.46	7.44	7.55	7.80			
US	5.44	5.81	6.59	5.68	6.91	6.11			
Japan	0.44	0.44	2.40	2.95					
Germany	3.09	3.17	5.79	5.89	6.63				
US interest rates									
	Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (%)	Year Ago	Long Term (%)	Year Ago		
US	8.06	6.69	7.46	7.44	7.55	7.80			
Japan	0.44	0.44	2.40	2.95					
Germany	3.09	3.17	5.79	5.89	6.63				
BOND YIELDS									
	Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (%)	Year Ago	Long Term (%)	Year Ago		
UK	8.06	6.69	7.46	7.44	7.55	7.80			
US	5.44	5.81	6.59	5.68	6.91	6.11			
Japan	0.44	0.44	2.40	2.95					
Germany	3.09	3.17	5.79	5.89	6.63				
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
	Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (%)	Year Ago	Long Term (%)	Year Ago		
Monument Oil	81.5	12.5	18.1	Thom	201.5	50	19.9		
Medeva	292.5	29.5	11.2	Sainsbury (J)	341	55.5	14.0		
Rugby Group	107.5	10.5	10.8	Anglo Wiggins Asset	168	18.5	9.9		

CURRENCIES									
£/\$									
	Index	Close	Week's chg	Yr Ago					
\$ (London)	1.6286	-3.94	1.5030						
\$ (New York)	1.6285	-4.56	1.5030						
DM (London)	2.6494	-3.60	2.2412						
¥ (London)	193.008	-11.755	160.327						
¥ (New York)	193.008	-11.755	160.327						
£ Index	95.3	-1.3	83.1						
£/DM									
	Index	Close	Week's chg	Yr Ago					
£ (London)	0.8140	+1.45	0.6653						
£ (New York)	0.8141	+1.99	0.6651						
DM (London)	1.2628	+1.55	1.4912						
¥ (London)	118.880	+11.750	106.675						
¥ (New York)	118.880	+11.750	106.675						
£ Index	101.0	+1.2	96.8						
OTHER INDICATORS									
	Index	Close	Week's chg	Yr Ago					
Oil Brent \$	22.39	-0.53	18.39						
Gold \$	352.85	-2.35	405.50						
Gold £	216.67	+3.72	269.86						
85% Rate									
85% Rate									

Clyde plays final card with '140p' valuation

Clyde Petroleum will publish a report from an oil industry consultant tomorrow that puts a value on its net assets of up to 140p, compared to the average of recent brokers' forecasts of 76p, writes Tom Stevenson.

The issue of the report, from Energy Resource Consultants, will represent Clyde's final card in its battle to fend off a hostile £432m bid from rival Gulf Canada.

The end of Clyde's defence will turn the spotlight on Gulf, which has so far failed to persuade institutions of the merits of its existing 105p offer. Clyde's

shares closed at the end of last week at 119p, suggesting the market expected a higher offer, and a number of institutions have indicated they would be unwilling to accept less than 135p for their shares.

Gulf has tried to talk down expectations that it will return with a significantly higher offer. Seen as a bid to talk down Clyde's share price, Gulf's stance has remained unchanged.

It says it will walk away rather than overpay for Clyde. Despite its hardline approach, many in the City expect Gulf to return with a sweetened deal.

Brown kills tax and spend once and for all



GAVIN DAVIES

The income tax commitments may have been eye-catching, but in practice they did not involve important new constraints on Labour's future freedom of manoeuvre.

During the Napoleonic War, the Duke of Wellington was required by the Treasury to account for every last detail of his army's expenditure. In reply, he asked "for elucidation of my instructions from you gentlemen of Whitehall so that I may better understand why I am dragging an army over these barren plains. It must be one of two alternative duties. I shall pursue either one, but I cannot do both. First, to train an army of uniformed British clerks in Spain for the benefit of British accountants... or, perchance, second, to see to it that the forces of Napoleon are driven out of Spain."

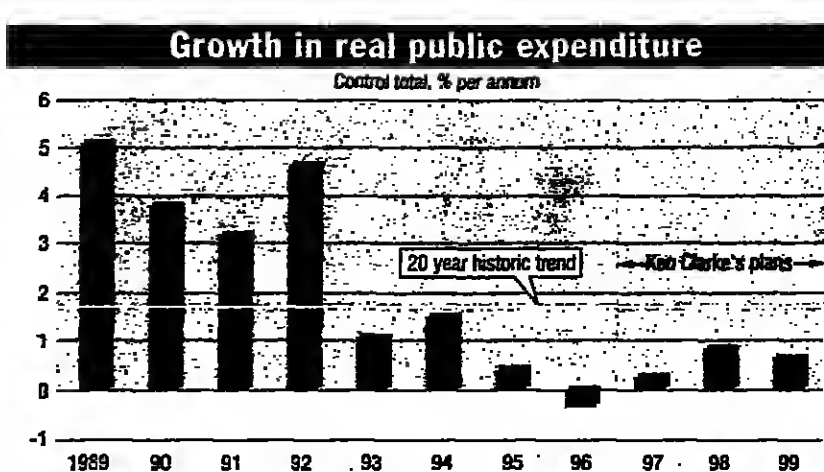
We are reminded of these words in a recent article by Nick Monck, formerly of the Treasury, who recognises that the control of public expenditure has been a contentious topic for as long as monarchs have levied taxes on their subjects, and accepts that an incoming Labour government will face huge pressure from the public services to repair two decades of Tory "underfunding". But he then puts in a cogent plea that a new Labour government should retain a "strong Treasury", focused mainly on accounting for the public sector's candle ends, and pre-empting overall spending targets largely independent of the views of the spending ministers themselves. His key point is that the control of aggregate spending is so difficult, and so important, that the entire public spending mechanism needs to be designed primarily with this in mind. Any relaxation in intent, he implies, will lead to an unintended explosion in spending. (Mr Monck's article appears in a valuable new collection of studies edited by Dan Corry of the IPPR, a think-tank not bedeviled by Michael Heseltine, but in this case a front for hard-headed analysis.)

Mr Monck's article also contains the following prophetic passage: "If a new government arrives with a clear commitment on borrowing (the golden rule), and a belief that taxes cannot be raised significantly without jeopardising the chances of re-election, the level of expenditure will have been largely determined. Accepting this would then be quicker and simpler than a wholly new start, and would be more like deriving ceilings from previous plans."

He is right. In fact, his article might have been the inspiration for Gordon Brown's watershed speech on tax and spend last Monday. For although Mr Brown's speech was initially noticed mainly for its promises on tax, its most important new commitment was to keep spending at the levels set by Kenneth Clarke until the end of 1998/99.

The income tax commitments may have been eye-catching, but in practice they did not involve important new constraints on Labour's future freedom of manoeuvre. No Chancellor would contemplate increasing the basic rate of income tax, except in the kind of extreme circumstances which would probably bring down a government anyway. Furthermore, an increase in the top rate of income tax would have raised little more than £1bn. Giving that up was a small price to pay for the political statement made. Even when added to Labour's other two commitments on tax – to reduce VAT on fuel from 8 to 5 per cent, and to avoid an extension in VAT coverage to food, fares, children's clothes, books and newspapers – there are plenty of other places for Mr Brown to look if he ever chooses to raise the burden of taxation.

This is presumably why he decided to give the electorate some extra reassurance on tax. Initially, he hit upon the formula of saying that Labour had no new spending commitments which would require extra tax to finance them. That seemed fairly watertight.



But it was eventually deemed not enough, since spending and tax could still rise for reasons unconnected with Labour's programme (as a result of higher unemployment for example). So last week Mr Brown went further and fixed the absolute total of spending at Mr Clarke's level.

The key question is whether this development, which offers the electorate a belt-and-braces guarantee on tax and spend, limits an incoming government's future freedom of manoeuvre in an unacceptable way. On the surface, there does seem to have been a loss of manoeuvrability here – after all, until last week, it would have been open to Mr Brown after the election to have made an immediate change to the Clarke spending targets, on the grounds that they had been set unrealistically low for political reasons. Even if this was not being contemplated, the precise target for government spending

in 1998/99 did not have to be finalised until November, and much can happen to change the appropriate level before then. This degree of elbow room has now been abandoned.

Furthermore, Labour has now voluntarily accepted the terms of an ingenious trap that was set for the next government by Mr Clarke's last two Budgets. In both of these packages, the Chancellor reduced the burden of taxation, justifying this on the grounds that public expenditure growth would be held down to implausibly low growth rates in the next three years (as the graph makes clear). Only if these spending plans can actually be delivered does the path for government borrowing in the Budget plans look even remotely appropriate.

This is the crux. Without the option of extra borrowing, any increase in the spending total obviously implied an acceptance that

the burden of tax would rise. And Messrs Blair and Brown genuinely do not wish to see this happening. No doubt they recognised that the arithmetic would apply just as remorselessly after the election as before it. They recalled that the 1974-79 Labour government never recovered from losing control of the purse strings in its first six months, and resolved that this was not going to happen to them. All of this being the case, why not bite the bullet immediately, when they might gain some electoral advantage from the announcement, and when any opposition to the decision from within their own ranks was likely to be more muted than it would be after polling day?

Of course it would have been more convenient if Mr Clarke had not cut taxation in the 1995 and 1996 Budgets, so that a higher baseline for tax receipts could have been allocated either to lower borrowing or to more realistic spending targets. But with Mr Clarke having cut taxation, all of Mr Brown's options were circumscribed and difficult. At the end of the day, it was more a question of when, rather than whether, to accept the spending totals. (Ironically, while the Clarke Budgets may have failed to win the 1997 election for the Tories, they might do more to contribute to the re-election of his party in 2002, after the electorate has observed Labour's attempts to hit his spending targets.)

There will be difficult times ahead. Although there has been no outcry from the Labour Party this week, the muffled sound of gnashed teeth and binned lips has emanated from many quarters, including some very close to the New Labour camp. Will Hutton has even suggested that Mr Brown's landmark speech could mark the end of "the social democratic project" in Britain. The Royal yacht will not be the only important casualty of this decision.

It's crunch time as PepsiCo gets set to offer the Frito challenge

David Usborne
New York

It was Superbowl time in the United States yesterday and the rhythmic crunching that you could hear across the land was not the sound of overdeveloped shoulders and leg gristle colliding on the field but of millions of viewers grazing on their TV snacks – multitudes of fists in multitudes of crisp and pretzel packets. A good day for American football fans, but an even better day for PepsiCo.

How many of these fans were also lugging cans of Pepsi from the fridge to the settee – rather than beer and, whisper it low, Coca-Cola – is less certain. But at the Purchase, New York, headquarters of PepsiCo, they will not worry too much about that. With 54 per cent of the domestic snack-food market controlled by its own Frito-Lay division, the battle of the super-crisp bowls will have assuredly been theirs.

A new PepsiCo is about to be

born and Frito-Lay will be at the core of it, with some suggesting, albeit mischievously, that Frito, not Pepsi, will be the company name. The metamorphosis was begun last week when PepsiCo chairman Roger Enrico finally announced what Wall Street had been dying to hear for months: the company was swearing off pizza, chicken and Mexican tacos for good.

The decision in spin off PepsiCo's three-chain fast food division, comprising Pizza Hut, Taco Bell and Kentucky Fried Chicken, won almost universal approval. The diversion into the restaurant business taken in the Seventies and Eighties proved a masterstroke for a while. But recently the three chains have been struggling: PepsiCo's shares have been in the dumps and management has been distracted by the problems.

So the restaurants will be released to go it alone. (In numbers of outlets it will be the highest fast-food enterprise in the world.) What will be really

interesting, now, however, is the direction that PepsiCo will take. Will Mr Enrico allow the company to become consumed once more by its decades-old rivalry with Coca-Cola? Or will he switch focus to his winning Frito-Lay brand? Or will both happen?

In the cola wars, PepsiCo was once a proud gladiator. Its successes in the 1980s included the pioneering of diet beverages and its "Take the Pepsi Challenge" campaigns. The slogan was in part responsible for the awful decision by Coca-Cola to introduce a "new" cola which then had to be replaced again by the "classic" vintage. Now, though, Pepsi is bumbled. While its standing in the US remains respectable, with 31 per cent of the market against Coca-Cola's 42 per cent, worldwide the picture is much more bleak. Coca-Cola has almost 50 per cent of the global market and Pepsi only 22 per cent.

Last year was especially dreadful for Pepsi. Little impact

was seen from its widely expensive shift from red-and-white to all-blue on its cans in international markets (in spite of the blue Concorde stunt). And it suffered acute setbacks in Latin America, notably the defection of its once super-loyal Venezuelan bottler to Coca-Cola and the virtual financial collapse of its giant bottling interests in Brazil.

There is now some optimism that, freed of the restaurants, PepsiCo can do a better job of selling the fizzy brown stuff. One consequence of the spin-off should be improved opportunities to get Pepsi flowing in the crucial restaurant-fountain market. Until now, whenever PepsiCo has asked a fast-food chain to include a Pepsi tap at its bar, the answer has been not if it helps promote your restaurants.

Mr Enrico should also be liberated to concentrate on solving PepsiCo's various bottling difficulties and getting his army marching aggressively again

around the globe. "Right now, PepsiCo has to attack the world, to continue to open countries such as China," said Tom Pirko of Bemark LLC, a New York consulting firm. "It shouldn't be worrying how to survive a bloody profit crunch in the pizza business." Other hopeful Pepsi spots include the rest of Asia and eastern Europe.

And then there is Frito-Lay. If PepsiCo wants to lay aside its fixation with catching up with Coca-Cola, it could conclude that its best hopes of growth (and of increased stock valuation) lie not in beverages at all, but in salty snacks. One version of the future would have PepsiCo as a snack-food behemoth with a healthy, but ancillary, fizzy drinks division.

Already PepsiCo has a huge lead. In 1995, its worldwide snack sales produced \$30.4bn compared with just \$18bn for Coca-Cola's snack brands. In 1995, the snacks division accounted for 44 per cent of PepsiCo's operating profits and



Getting a pizza the action: Pizza Hut is one of three chains that will be floated off

the figure is still rising. Internationally, profits from snacks in the same year rose by an impressive 16 per cent. And consider this statistic as a pointer to potential for global growth: the average non-American consumes just 2 pounds of crisps and pretzels in a year

while the guzzling American puts away 17.5 pounds (a good part of it on Superbowl Sunday). All PepsiCo has to do is get the rest of the world as addicted to TV-snacking as Uncle Sam. "In the US, roughly a quarter-billion people create \$6bn in sales," Steven Reinemund, who

heads the snack-food division, said recently. "There are 6 billion people internationally, so imagine the opportunity." With the pizza and chicken wings leaving by the back door, a new mantra might be apt at PepsiCo headquarters: it's time to take the Frito challenge.

'Quarter of female solicitors harassed'

Roger Trapp

A quarter of young female solicitors claim to have been subjected to sexual harassment during their careers, according to a survey published today.

The report, "The Law at Work", by legal recruitment consultancy Reynell, also reports that half of women solicitors feel they have experienced discrimination in their career because of their gender.

But the findings suggest that it is not only women who are suffering. Assistant solicitors, lawyers who are not partners in their firms, feel undervalued. They complain that a "long hours culture" is blighting the profession and just under half of respondents say they feel vulnerable if they are not seen to be working the same hours as colleagues.

They are also pessimistic about their chances of promotion and critical of management, with two out of three assistants unable to say they have full confidence in decisions made by senior partners.

Reynell believes that some of the problems stem from poor internal communications, pointing out that relatively few assistants know enough about the performance of firms which, as partnerships, are not required to disclose financial information.

Stuart Robinson, Reynell senior consultant, said: "British law firms have emerged from the recession providing a range and quality of legal services unrivalled by any other country."

"However, there is evidence to suggest that the higher levels of competitiveness may be having an adverse effect on junior practitioners."

IN BRIEF

• Porsche, the luxury car manufacturer, is set to become the latest German company to shift its production abroad to meet strong demand for its latest model and to escape high labour costs. "We are not able to fulfil the incoming orders," Porsche's chief executive, Wendelin Wiedeking, told the BBC's *Money Programme*. "There are in western Europe some capacities available where we want to go with our key people." Mr Wiedeking declined to say who Porsche's partner would be to build some of the new Boxster sports cars, for which there is a six-month waiting list. The move has angered workers who fear it is an attempt to cut costs.

• Wage increases are being paid for by improved productivity in nine out of 10 companies, according to a survey today from the Confederation of British Industry. Just over half the 700 manufacturing and service firms surveyed said pay and productivity were increasing at the same rate while 38 per cent said performance was improving faster than pay. Increased investment in new technology and plant and greater labour flexibility were cited as among the main reasons for the productivity growth.

• Managers are struggling to assess the worth of people businesses, especially in the Square Mile, according to a report by City law firm Theodores Goddard. Market research group NOP found that half of the directors of Britain's top 1,000 companies believe it is impossible to accurately assess the value of staff when buying or selling a company. They also tend to be frustrated by the belief that accountants instinctively rate property and plant higher than people when establishing the worth of a business. This is particularly true in the City, where the role of individuals has been highlighted by the Nicola Horlick affair.

• ScottishPower has won a £25m contract to supply electricity to all three of Motorola's semiconductor production plants in Scotland. The three-year deal is one of the biggest group energy deals of its kind and covers factories at South Queensferry, East Kilbride and Bathgate. The company already supplies electricity to IBM, United Glass and National Semiconductor.

• Labour says the new Asylum Act, which comes into force today, will criminalise small firms and cost them at least £12.5m in the first year alone. From today every employer must check the immigration status of potential employees and recognise documents ranging from a Liechtenstein passport to an Icelandic identity card in order to establish a defence against prosecution under the Act.

• Bioscience Innovation Centre plans to become the latest biotech company to seek a listing on the Stock Exchange. The Cambridge-based firm plans to raise up to £6m through a placing and offer on the junior Alternative Investment Market. BIC aims to identify the most promising embryonic bioscience businesses, give them laboratory and office facilities and provide management skills. David Best, its chief executive, helped group biotechnology group PolyMASC for its flotation on AIM last year. Teather & Greenwood is the nominated adviser and broker to the company.

• Celtic Energy, Britain's second-biggest coal miner, plans to move into power generation. It is in talks to buy Uskmouth B power station near Newport in south Wales which has been closed for 18 months.

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

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science

Litmus test for the loathed

A general election will decide the fate of an unpopular science policy, says Charles Arthur

Prestige. Status. National pride. Those are the sort of words that a vengeful defence secretary might use when announcing (to pluck an example from the air) a new royal yacht: but they're also, you would hope, the sort of considerations that would go into deciding the fate of the nation's publicly held scientific expertise. You can be sure, though, that the fate of the latter will not reap the same headlines when it is announced in Parliament in the next fortnight or so.

Yet it will, arguably, affect more people – specifically, thousands of scientists and staff at Government-owned research laboratories up and down the country.

The expected announcement will be the next stage of the Government's Prior Options policy, which aims to see whether there are better ways of managing various laboratories currently funded by the public sector. Those laboratories cover a huge range of expertise – the Royal Observatory, fisheries research, buildings research, a broad range of animal and veterinary research, the Public Health Laboratory Service, and others – employing more than 20,000 people.

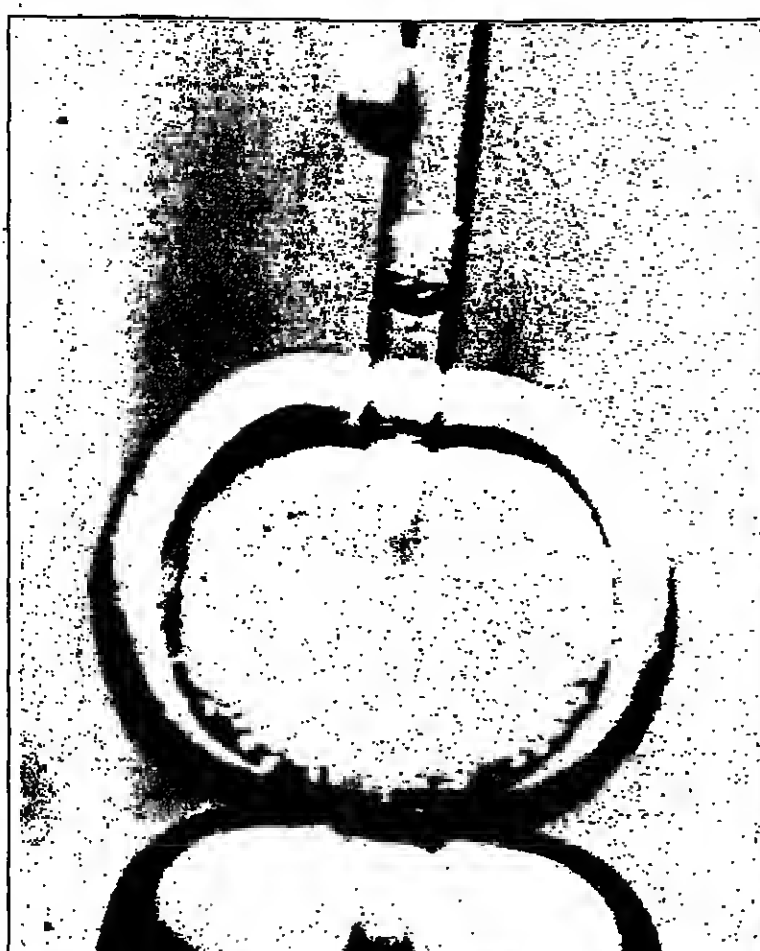
There's a fair chance that the decision will be more popular than last week's one about That Yacht – particularly if the decision is effectively no decision, in the form of a postponement. That would push any real action beyond the date of the general election. If the Labour Party wins that, it has already pledged not to continue with the programme.

But even if no more laboratories are moved immediately out of the public sector, figures collated by the Labour Party show that the cost of the review is already at least £4.3m, including £2m spent preparing the Royal Observatory for privatisation before the idea was abandoned late last year.

Adam Ingram, the shadow minister for science and technology, notes that the real cost may be higher: much of the review work has been done by full-time staff at the centres, whose time is not clocked in the same way as that of a consultant investigating it.

There are also the pension costs of doing this, but those are unquantifiable," he said after collating the figures last week. "These are just the costs of getting ready to do it. But given the imminence of the general election, and the importance of PSREs (public sector research establishments), I think this issue would be better considered after the election."

The name of the scheme refers to the checklist against which a laboratory should, by the ideology, have been



Cloning of cells and sheep at Edinburgh's Roslin Institute, a laboratory considered for privatisation. Photographs: Science Photo Library/Care Arron

checked before continuing as part of the public sector. The options are to abolish it, privatise it or contract it out. (Management buy-outs are allowed, though not bids by the research councils which operate the laboratories.)

For a government that seems to thrive on unpopularity, the Prior Options scheme is ideal compost to heap upon the heads of those in the public sector. It really is hard to find anyone with a good word to say for it, aside from the ministers at the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Even the DTI press office wasn't able last week to find a figure for the savings produced since the first sell-offs were announced, with the sale of the Transport Research Laboratory and the Laboratory of the Government Chemist last April. The latter wasn't exactly profit-making: the buyer paid £360,000 but the DTI handed over almost £2m to relieve the Government of liabilities linked to disentangling it from the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington, which handles various physical standards.

(That was handed over to private management in July 1995.)

By contrast, it's hard to pick up a science paper without coming across someone who is unhappy about Prior Options. Last year the Royal Society issued a statement criticising the scheme on four key points, notably that "care is needed to ensure that Prior Options does not damage the highly successful collaboration that has built up between universities and research council institutes, and that repeated reviews questioning the continued existence of public sector research establishments ... [might] adversely affect efficiency and productivity."

Nor does the scheme have a fan in Derek Roberts, a former GEC manager who is now provost of University College, London, and president this year of the British Association. He, like many critics, objects that the principle of selling off national expertise and putting it into the private sector doesn't allow for the swings and roundabouts of the economic cycle.

"If you privatise something and sell it off," he says, "then by definition it will go through bad periods without particular hazards, when nothing much needs investigating. The whole thing could be reduced in scale, or closed. Then, three weeks later, we have a disaster and need it again, at full strength or more."

Examples are not hard to think of: the BSE crisis (and last March's announcement of a putative link with the human disease CJD), and the *E. coli* outbreak in Scotland, come to mind.

The independence of such research establishments is also important. John Mulvey, of the pressure group Save British Science, comments: "Their independence and disinterestedness must be beyond question. But in the private sector that's not the case. We have seen how tobacco companies have suppressed research they funded but whose results they haven't liked."

The Buildings Research Establishment (BRE) is the next in line to be privatised. Isn't it surprising to find Professor Roberts leading one of the two

bidders left in last week's race for it?

Not so, he replies. "I think most of the disposals are bad. But we have created a trust with about 100 companies in the construction industry because we believe that this way, training and research expertise will be retained in the BRE." The individual companies can also feel confident that any research is impartial.

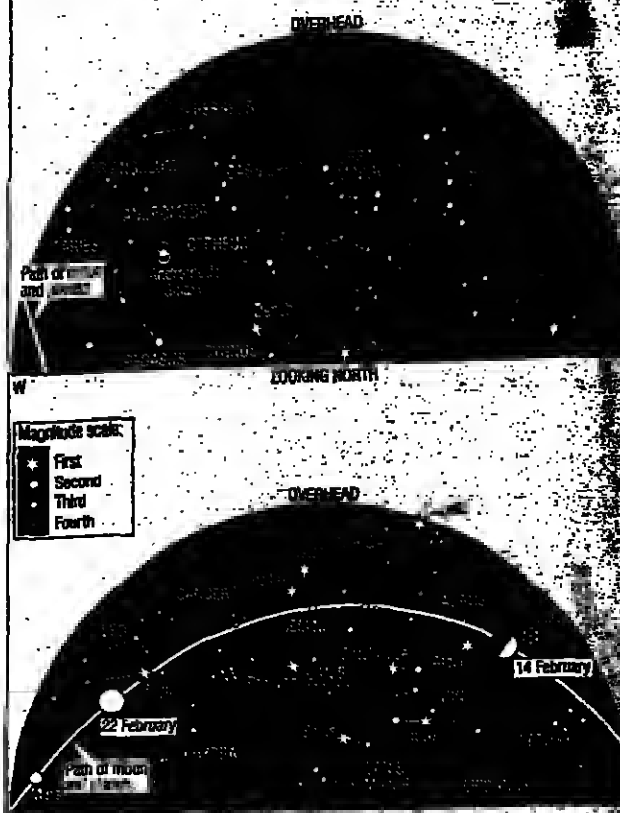
"The maximum exposure is £1, which I provided out of my pocket. The idea isn't to take risks – banks can take risks. It's a stupid policy, but if that's the policy then that's what we have to do." All the same, he says, "The whole thing is being pursued on a ridiculous timescale." His consortium's bid went in last Monday, with the choice due last Friday. (The other bidder is a management buy-out backed by the venture capital firm 3i.)

"The final disposal terms will be negotiated by the end of February, which is ludicrous."

Not that anyone said government policies had to make sense – except when there's an election looming.

The stars at night

The sky as it will appear in mid-February at 10pm



There is a hint of a new season in the night sky this month, with the appearance of Leo, the most prominent constellation of spring, in the east. It will move to centre stage high in the south during March and April.

Another return graces the skies this February. Until May, we'll be hearing in greater detail about Comet Hale-Bopp, an unexpected celestial apparition which may be the most spectacular comet for almost a century.

This ball of ice and rock is brightening as it closes in on the Sun, boiling off its ices ever more fiercely. Look to the east in the pre-dawn skies for a first sighting, but don't worry too much if you're not an early riser – the best is yet to come. The comet will be brightest in late March and early April.

This month, early-evening skies are dominated by the brilliant stars of winter. Look south for mighty Orion, with seven bright stars framing his shoulders and belt. To the upper right is his ancient adversary, Taurus the bull.

The evening sky is also sporting two planets. Saturn is glowing in the south west after sunset. It sets at 8.30pm; simultaneously, orange-red Mars is rising in the east. Two American probes – Mars Global Surveyor and Mars Pathfinder – are on their way to the red planet for a rendezvous in the summer and early autumn. Designed long before last summer's Martian life controversy, they will be seeking out water on the planet.

Saturn, meantime, is the target of a much more drawn-out space mission. The US probe Cassini will be launched in October on a journey to the vast ring world which will take seven years. The main Cassini craft will release the European Space Agency's Huygens craft, which will land on Titan, the planet's biggest moon. This mysterious world is wreathed in a thick orange atmosphere, under which may lurk molecules that could form life in warmer conditions.

February diary
7 3.06pm new moon
14 8.57am Moon at first quarter
22 10.27am full moon

Heather Couper and Nigel Henbest

theoretically ...

Tumours need blood, so if you cut off their blood supply, they should die, shouldn't they? That's the thinking being pursued by a team at Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. They treated solid tumours in mice with an antibody intended to promote blood clotting in those cells when given intravenously, the therapy resulted in complete tumour regressions in 38 per cent of the cancerous mice. The strategy can't be used immediately in humans, though, because suitable antibodies for tumour blood vessels haven't yet been identified.

If you have a tense, nervous headache, don't blame mechanical tension. That's what helps to hold your neurons together and allowed your cerebral cortex to fold so thoroughly. That's the suggestion (at least, the bit about the tension) is from David Van Essen at Washington University, Missouri, who in last week's edition of *Nature* suggests that the mechanical

tension along parallel fibres in the cortex can explain why the average cerebral cortex is so highly folded that it has a surface area of about 1,600 square centimetres – three times what it would be without any convolutions.

Why scream while you're being eaten by a tiger? Maybe it is the sort of question only scientists would ask, but it's particularly in the kind that puzzles behavioural ecologists. Is it to warn other potential victims away? Or to attract help? A new experiment with pike and minnows (the former eats the latter) by a Canadian team found a third reason: you might attract another predator which would fight the first one for you, the trophy – giving you the chance to slip away. Worth bearing in mind if you're an explorer ...

The smell of garlic on somebody's breath doesn't come directly from the plant itself, but from chemical changes in the blood, according to a team from the University of Innsbruck in Austria. Three

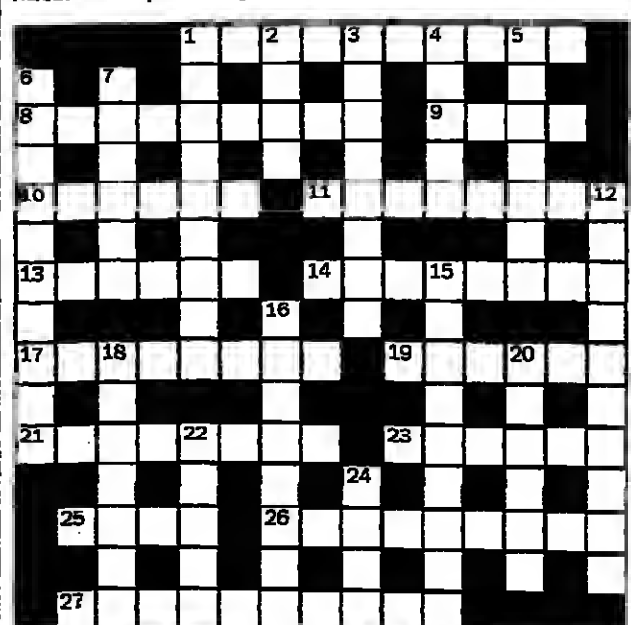
compounds – allyl methyl sulphide, dimethyl sulphide and acetone – took some hours to reach their peak level in blood, and were still present 30 hours later. But acetone is produced by degradation of fatty compounds in the blood, including cholesterol, and its concentration in subjects' breath was higher than that from crushed garlic.

Hawaii, California and Florida have the most endangered species, according to a new map of biodiversity in the US, drawn up by a team from Princeton University. The map shows "hot spots" where unusually large numbers of endangered species are found: unsurprisingly, these tend to overlap with intensive urbanisation and agriculture. Such species also tend to be "endemic" (restricted in their ability to shift to new sites) and so are prone to extinction. Knowing where the hot spots are can help save species, because a large proportion of endangered species can be protected on a small proportion of land, say the authors.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3206, Monday 27 January

By Fortia



- ACROSS**
- Match reference number (2-8)
 - Breaking party-line leads to reciprocal action (9)
 - Don't start Hungarian wine – all right (4)
 - Go along with scheduled attack (4,2)
 - Avoid Pole despite arrangement (8)
 - Suppose former favourite's hiding note (6)
 - Be right about one Renaissance sculptor (8)
 - Actor's public hearing (8)
 - Runner's worry about money being on time (6)
 - Play's a piece by English comic writer (4,4)
 - Unprincipled American male's spoken at last (6)
 - Fret over never-ending drill (4)
 - Plan one now strains say (9)
 - Being fit and attractive looking (10)

DOWN

- Feel concern about scum-like ornament (9)
- The Italian's absorbed by exceptionally large paintings (4)
- Suddenly understand when you see it (8)
- Loop round inside bouquet (5)
- Vehicle's part of contract order (7)
- Drink too much old wine and turn in (3,4)
- Incite prison in rebellion (4,2)
- Very close detail isn't filled in (10)
- Fashionable society, French style (4,5)
- Reason for happening (8)
- When one smiles it gives a false impression (7)
- Pass from number one forward on the outside (6)
- They are entitled to services we hear (5)
- Knife sticks upside-down (4)

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